

DUNCAN '08 ■ IRAQ: CONSTITUTION WITHOUT A COUNTRY

SEPTEMBER 12, 2005

# The American Conservative

## END OF THE BINGE

What Happens  
When Cheap Oil  
Runs Out

James Howard Kunstler



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## REMEDIAL LATIN AMERICA

I can't believe that you actually swallowed the hokum dished out by James Gass (Aug. 1). In the first place, we import little fresh meat from Latin America. Tinned or otherwise preserved meat constitutes the bulk of our beef imports, not the fresh stuff going to McDonald's, which is primarily produced domestically. And I can't see how banana plants and other cultivated vegetation should function less effectively as "lungs" than jungle growth.

I wonder how teenage girls in Latin America would fare if they didn't have jobs. Maybe they all could go to college and become executives. Left out of the article is the tendency of Latin Americans simply to skip in and out of jobs. Crummy jobs always have a tendency to have a high turnover. I'm not saying that CAFTA is good or bad, just that this article is horrendous.

LEONARD MARTINO  
*via e-mail*

### James Gass replies:

While Mr. Martino seems confused about whether CAFTA is good or bad, I do not share his bewilderment about free-trade pacts. CAFTA is clearly not all that perplexes him, however.

Contrary to what he claims, my article does not mention U.S. fast-food meat imports but rather how cattle ranches and McDonald's have contributed to the clear-cutting of the rainforests. Nonetheless, officials from Co-op Montecillos, a hamburger processing plant in Costa Rica, have testified in court: "We export meat to the U.S., 70 percent goes to food production outlets, such as restaurant chains. We supply McDonald's." A McDonald's official stated, "When the first McDonald's restaurant was opened in 1970, some of the land on which beef was raised had been rainforest up until the 1960s."

By Mr. Martino's admission, he cannot grasp why "banana plants and other cultivated vegetation" cannot

replace rainforests. Banana plants and pesticides are ecologically demanding on the land and cause a rapid decline in the soil, wherein rainforests are cut even further for frequent crop rotation.

Finally, he implies that I neglect the difficulties of teenage and migrant workers. I explicitly mention 90-day contracts and laborers moving from plantation to plantation. Sympathy for the hardships of Central America's workers is a compelling argument for rejecting CAFTA.

## NO PLACE FOR A FAMILY

While William Lind's article on New Urbanism (Aug. 1) makes some salient points about the greatly needed revival of cities, he misses one major factor that especially threatens the acknowledged conservative virtue of community: utter disregard for the middle class.

The flight of middle-income families from the cities in the 1960s and '70s was largely prompted by increased crime rates, but here in New York, it is now an economic issue. We have a mayor who pursues socially liberal policies antagonistic to the views of many middle-class New Yorkers while embracing the virtues of the free market with reckless zealotry. Michael Bloomberg is a developer's best friend. The least of his concerns is affordable housing, which is utterly extinct in all but the most criminally infested neighborhoods, where no family would wish to raise children.

DINKs (double income, no kids), trust-fund singles, and the aloof affluent are now dominating a city bathed in self-absorption and elitism. Middle-class opportunities and community organizations are all but forgotten. More vital to the denizens of Manhattan are the next trip to the Hamptons and dinner reservations at Nobu.

Moreover, the architecture of the city now favors malls such as the Time Warner Center at Columbus Circle and

big-box stores on Broadway, thus encouraging shallow consumerism of imported products and making Manhattan familiar and comfortable to newcomers who would have embraced none of the city's artistic, cultural, and civic legacies of the past. They are anything but the glue with which community is fostered. Perhaps New Urbanism needs to be coupled with New Populism.

DAVID BUOKAS  
*New York, N.Y.*

## LEAVE IT TO THE LOCALS

Steven Anderson's "Property Wrongs" (Aug. 1) is as timely and incisive as it is one-sided. Based on precedent, no one should have been surprised *Kelo v. New London* turned out as it did.

Alleged advocates for limited government would in other circumstances, such as abortion, be the first to insist on deference to the local legislature. But when it suits their purposes, such as in *Kelo*, they too try to hide behind the Supreme Court's apron strings just as quickly as the liberals they criticize.

As a six-time citizens' association president, I know only too well what a disaster *Kelo* could be for local citizens, but Anderson's critique amounts to completely disavowing local government as so inherently corrupt because of developer campaign contributions and cozy deals that it cannot be trusted. Just because Mark Twain was right when he observed we have the best government money can buy should never be an excuse for paleoconservatives to trump local control with federal judicial edict.

DINO DRUDI  
*Washington, D.C.*

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[WAR]

## VACATION FROM REALITY

While antiwar protestors encircle his Crawford ranch, President Bush is still gulping that cocktail of groundless optimism and hallmark stubbornness that allows him to believe Baghdad will burst forth into democracy any day now. If he read newspapers, the Great Liberator would find that the numbers have turned against him: 57 percent say the war has made the U.S. less safe from terrorism, 54 percent think the invasion was a mistake, and just 34 percent approve of the president's handling of the situation. Undaunted, Bush digs in deeper, reaffirming last week that withdrawal would "send a terrible signal" and would be "a mistake for the security of this country."

But he can only vacation from reality for so long. In the *New York Daily News*, Reagan Assistant Secretary of Defense Lawrence Korb writes, "[E]ven if we wanted to keep about 140,000 ground troops in Iraq through 2006, we cannot do so without breaking the all-volunteer Army." (Tell it to John McCain who, having delusions for breakfast on "Fox News Sunday," said, "We don't need to withdraw—we need more troops there.") According to Korb, by the end of the year, nearly every active-duty American soldier will have spent at least two tours in Iraq. Sending soldiers back for a third round of occupation duty will wreck recruiting and retention—not to mention violating the law that forbids reservists from serving on active duty for more than two years.

Sensing that the Pentagon might be awakening to this hard truth, *The Weekly Standard* unleashed an editorial condemning "the inescapable whiff of weakness and defeatism," urging, "What the president needs to do now is tell the Pentagon to stop talking about (and planning for) withdrawal ..." At the expense of our Army's health and in defi-

ance of the democratic will? No victory is worth that price, and though it seems that no one has told Texas, Iraq remains far from the winning side.

[IMMIGRATION]

## DEAN SCREAMS BIGOT

In a moment of dizzy editorial whimsy in the summer of 2003, *TAC*'s current editor suggested that Howard Dean might lead his party out of the wilderness, and win the presidency, by embracing the commonsense immigration-reform policies put forth most notably by the late congresswoman Barbara Jordan. (She chaired a Clinton-appointed panel in the mid-1990s, recommending tighter border enforcement, limiting the number of legal visas, and an overall reduction of immigration rates.) Other figures on the immigration-realist Right—John O'Sullivan for one—seconded the emotion. Dean ignored our advice.

As if to demonstrate how misplaced our thoughts were, Dean last month went on his Summer Multiculti Demagoguery Tour, claiming that Republicans are going to "scapegoat immigrants" in their 2006 campaign. Speaking at a La Raza convention, he called Congressman Tom Tancredo (R-Colo.), chair of the House Immigration Reform Caucus, a "bigot."

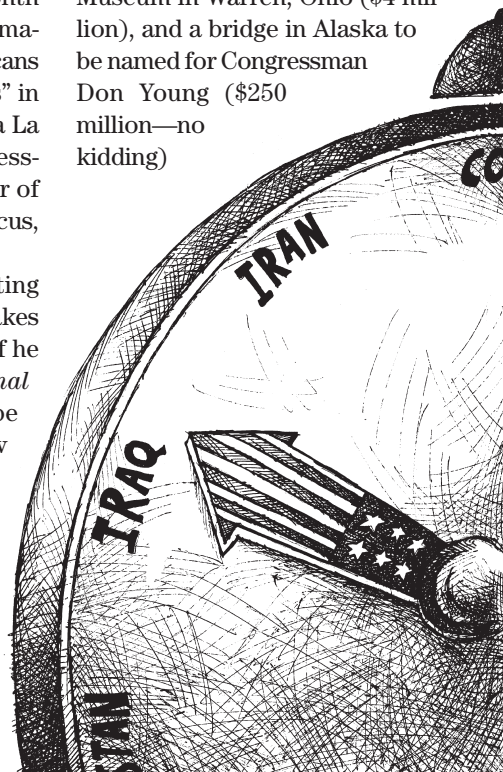
If Dean thinks that advocating enforcement of the nation's laws makes one a bigot, he should say so, and if he believes, like the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, that there should be open borders and no immigration law enforcement, he ought to make that position clear. If, as we suspect, he is finding that his current role as chief party fundraiser means that he can no longer speak out forcefully against the Iraq War but must concentrate instead on defaming immigration reformers, that tells us much about the current state of the Democratic Party.

[SPENDING]

## THE ROAD TO RED INK

"Highways just don't happen," President Bush said as he signed this year's 1,000-page, \$286.4 billion, pork-laden transportation bill into law. "People have got to show up and do the work to refit a highway or build a bridge," he continued, "and they need new equipment to do so. So the bill I'm signing is going to help give hundreds of thousands of Americans good-paying jobs." Say what you will about the president's grasp of the English language—schoolchildren might get the impression from him that "just don't" and "don't just" mean the same thing—he at least seems to have his Keynesian economics down pat.

Bush had earlier said he wouldn't sign the bill if it went beyond \$284 billion, but evidently he just couldn't bear to see such vital national interests as the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan (\$2.4 million), the National Packard Museum in Warren, Ohio (\$4 million), and a bridge in Alaska to be named for Congressman Don Young (\$250 million—no kidding)



deprived of precious funding. "Our economy depends on us having the most efficient, reliable transportation system in the world," Bush said at the signing, demonstrating that in addition to Keynesianism, he knows a thing or two about irony as well.

[CULTURE]

## BORKING BACKFIRES

Baseless smears of Robert Bork—attacking him as a supporter of segregated lunch counters for blacks, back-alley abortions for women, and midnight knocks at the door for anyone who was feeling left out—were key to defeating his nomination to the Supreme Court. NARAL Pro-Choice America, in its notorious (and rightly withdrawn) advertisement trying to tie John Roberts to antiabortion violence, had clearly hoped for a reprise.

That NARAL instead was widely condemned shows how much things have changed since borking was invented. Voters have grown accustomed to the histrionics of the professional Left and no longer take its wilder charges seriously. The desperation of the anti-Roberts fusillade is also a sign that NARAL-style absolutists are losing the abortion debate. Rather than being forced into line behind the abortion-rights lobby, staunchly pro-choice politicians like Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter and ranking Democrat Patrick Leahy seemed embarrassed. It is uncertain how Roberts would vote on *Roe v. Wade*, but it is clearly a distortion to suggest his record demonstrates sympathy for abortion-clinic bombers.

A new political reality has taken hold: the type of slurs that sank Bork no longer move public opinion. And few Americans confuse NARAL's quasi-religious devotion to unfettered abortion on demand with the dictates of the Constitution.

[N.B.]

## SUMMER READING

Paul Weyrich calls it "The Next Conservatism." But his series of 12 short essays on the Right after Bush looks as much to the past as to the future—exactly as a conservative should. The cultural traditionalism of Russell Kirk and the noninterventionist foreign policy of Robert A. Taft inform these essays (available at [www.freecongress.org](http://www.freecongress.org)), which *TAC* readers will find well worth their time.

"The Next Conservatism" revisits several themes that Weyrich's colleague Bill Lind has treated in our pages: a proper conservative concern with community, the danger of decaying states abroad and a growing national-security state at home, and the primacy of culture over politics. Where Weyrich's essays touch upon the political process directly, he proposes major reforms: simplifying the tax code, term limits for Congress, greater use of ballot initiatives and referenda, and "a level playing field for third parties." The merits of some of these measures are debatable, but all have the virtue of making the political class—Republican and Democrat alike—intensely uncomfortable.

[NEXT]

## A WAR PRESIDENT'S WORK IS NEVER DONE

### On Iran:

"As I say, all options are on the table. The use of force is the last option for any president."

—George W. Bush  
Interview, Israel's Channel One  
Aug. 12, 2005

### On Iraq:

"I will keep all options on the table. ... We want to resolve all issues peacefully."

—George W. Bush  
News Conference, Tokyo  
Feb. 18, 2002

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# Creating a Nation Out of Paper

The drafters of the Iraqi constitution have been granted one more week to complete the document in which the administration has invested our hopes for a united and

democratic Iraq. So then we can come home with “Mission Accomplished.”

Pardon my pessimism, but failure seems assured. For a constitution does not create a nation. A nation creates a constitution. And a nation of Iraq, to which those 25 million people give primary allegiance, love, and loyalty, does not exist. The Iraqis are Shia, Kurds, Sunnis, Turkmen, and their primordial bonds are blood and soil, mosque and “the mystic chords of memory.”

No constitution can create a nation where a nation does not already exist. It will fall apart as the Czechoslovakia created at the Paris peace conference of 1919 fell apart in 1939, and, recreated after World War II, fell apart again after 1989. Ethnicity and faith tore asunder an arranged marriage of the nation-builders Wilson and Lloyd George.

While our Constitution created the government of the United States, America already existed in the hearts of her people before Hamilton and Madison went to Philadelphia. Even before our Constitution was ratified, John Jay had written in *Federalist* 2, “Providence has been pleased to give this one connected country to one united people ... descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in their manners and customs, and who ... fighting side by side throughout a long and bloody war, have nobly established their general liberty and independence.”

Do such bonds exist today among Iraqis whose country was held together,

before March 2003, by a Sunni-dominated Baath Party and the secret police of Saddam Hussein?

From Ottoman days, the Iraqis have been held together by force and fear. Now that the Americans have smashed the state, party, and police who held them together, why should they stay together? Do Kurds in Kirkuk have more in common with Shi’ites in Najaf than their cousins in Turkey? Do Ayatollah Sistani’s Shias have more in common with Turkmen and Tikritis than their fellow Shia in Iran?

To see the future of Iraq, look at our own history. Though a common ancestry, language, faith, manners, customs, memories, and institutions united us in 1787, again and again we sought to dissolve our Union. New England sought to secede during Madison’s War of 1812, South Carolina over the “Tariff of Abominations,” and old John Quincy Adams urged disunion rather than bring the slave-holding Texans in. After November 1860, seven Southern states seceded rather than be ruled by a high-tariff abolitionist Republican Party headed by a railroad lawyer who represented the money power of the North.

It was the neoconservatives who planned this war for years and seized on 9/11 to persuade an untutored president to launch it. George W. Bush was assured it would be “a cakewalk,” that we would be welcomed as the liberators of Baghdad, that democracy would take root and spread to Damascus, Tehran, Riyadh, and across the Islamic world. He would be the Churchill of his

generation. They were all going to make history.

And they have certainly done that.

That Bush came to believe in a world democratic revolution seems evident. His is the zeal of the convert. As testimony to his sincerity, he has made democracy the altarpiece of his presidency. As Iraq and the world democratic revolution go, so goes the Bush presidency. The only question remaining is: will he be remembered as a Reagan or a Carter?

But did the neocons ever believe in such utopianism? Or were they cynically manipulating Wilsonian ideals—with their appeal to liberals—to mask a hidden agenda: their own power and its endless exercise?

Kevin Phillips once famously said, “a neoconservative is more likely to be a magazine editor than a bricklayer.” Another friend, Jon Utley, notes that, as so few of the neocons are businessmen or military men, they rarely consider the consequences should their ideas prove wrong. Editors seldom pay the cost in destroyed careers, lost fortunes, ruined reputations, long casualty lists, and lost wars for the failed policies they promote.

Prediction: even if the new constitution finesses the issues of the Koran as the source of law and sovereignty for Kurds and Shias, even if the provinces embrace it and its passes in October, it will not unite this disparate people. For it is but a contract, a piece of paper, and Islamic men are not people of parchment. When the commands of that constitution collide with what is best for Shia, Sunni, or Kurd, they will cast it aside and stand for family, faith, and clan.

You cannot create a nation out of paper. ■



[past the peak]

# End of the Binge

The exhaustion of our energy supply may end affluence as we know it.

By James Howard Kunstler

AMONG THE STRANGE delusions and hallucinations gripping the body politic these days is the idea that the so-called global economy is a permanent fixture of the human condition. The seemingly unanimous embrace of this idea in the power circles of America is a marvelous illustration of the madness of crowds, for nothing could be farther from the truth.

The global economy is, in fact, nothing more than a transient set of trade and financial relations based on a particular set of transient, special sociopolitical conditions, namely a few decades of relative world peace between the great powers along with substantial, reliable supplies of predictably cheap fossil fuels. The result, as far as America is concerned, has been an extended fiesta based on suburban comfort, easy motor-ing, fried food in abundance, universal air conditioning, and bargain-priced imported merchandise acquired on promises to pay later—a way of life described by Vice President Cheney as “non-negotiable.”

Of particular concern ought to be the 12,000-mile-long merchandise supply lines from Asia that American retailers such as Wal-Mart depend on and from which American “consumers” (as opposed to citizens, i.e., people with duties, obligations, and responsibilities) get most of their household goods these days. Wal-Mart now gets 70 percent of its products from China.

This fragile calculus plays out against a background of rapidly escalating and increasingly desperate strategic maneuvering around the global oil-production peak and its implications. Peak oil, for short, would unseat the relative peace and cheap-energy basis of our current global arrangements. It is already beginning to happen. Yet most of the discussion about the boon of globalism, especially the virtual cheerleading of *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman, is occurring in complete disregard of the gathering peak-oil crisis. The Left and Right are both equally guilty of epic cluelessness.

Even among those who have heard the term, peak oil is generally misunderstood. It's not about running out of oil. It's about the remorseless decline in production following the all-time worldwide peak and a desperate competition to control the remaining supplies, which happen to be inequitably distributed in a few select regions of the world. The U.S. happens to be one of them, but we are into the twilight of our own supplies. We began production back in 1859, ramped up over many decades to a peak of over 10 million barrels a day in 1970, and have now fallen off to under 5 million barrels a day of conventional crude—with the numbers headed yet more steeply down. We have 28 billion barrels of conventional crude left, and we burn through more than 20 million barrels a day or 7

billion barrels a year. Of that, we import nearly three quarters of the total. The math isn't very reassuring.

Commentators such as Daniel Yergin, author of *The Prize*, a history of the oil industry, and now head of Cambridge Energy Research Associates, a PR firm serving the major oil companies, like to point to North America's substantial supplies of tar sands (they're up in Canada) and oil shale (it isn't really oil but a hydrocarbon precursor called kerogen). The main catch is that these unconventional sources will yield oil only at high prices, while the procedures for getting them impose additional severe environmental costs including massive water pollution. (In the case of the Rocky Mountain oil shales, the water necessary for processing them in marketable quantities isn't even available.)

Two other linked delusions also tend to queer the public discussion. One is that technology will rescue us from energy scarcity, which is based on the idea that technology can be substituted for energy, that they are virtually interchangeable. This is just a plain misunderstanding of reality. Technology and energy are not the same thing. One does not run without the other. Linked to this is the notion that alternative energy sources—coal, natural gas, solar and wind power, hydrogen, nuclear fission and fusion, bio-fuels, and even some long shots like zero-point energy (ZPE)—will bail us out.

The truth is that there is not going to be a hydrogen economy because hydrogen requires more energy to produce than you get back. That's why you haven't heard any more about it since President Bush's premature tub-thumping in the 2002 State of the Union address. We have less coal than many people believe, of lower quality, and using it comes with enormous costs related to climate change. Our natural gas supplies are arguably more at risk of depletion than our oil supplies. Wind and solar energy will never produce more than a fraction of what we are currently using, nor can these things do what oil does in transportation. We probably will have to resort to more nuclear-powered electric generation if we want to keep the lights on after 2025, but we're not going to run the interstate highway system on electricity alone nor fly jet planes on U-235. Fusion is still the same energy of the future that it was in 1970. ZPE is a mere hypothesis.

Make no mistake, we will be using many of these things, but they will not replace the benefits we have derived from cheap oil, and they will not in themselves be cheap or plentiful. The bottom line is that no combination of alternative fuels or systems for running them will allow us to run the non-negotiable American Dream the way we are currently running it—or even a substantial portion of it. We are going to have to make other arrangements, and the process will probably include an interval of hardship and discontinuity.

\* \* \*

The U.S. oil production peak in 1970 was what led to the OPEC disturbances of that decade, as other nations with younger oil industries discovered that world pricing power had suddenly shifted to them and took advantage of the situation. America went through a harrowing decade of “stagflation” and

related economic woes: high unemployment, inflation, skyrocketing interest rates, tanking industries, asset deflation, gas lines. In response to that trauma, the U.S. and its Western allies desperately brought into production the last great discoveries of the oil age, the North Sea and the arctic region of Alaska. While these developments afforded us some leverage against OPEC and bought us

ever more suburban sprawl and its accessories was mostly what we did in America. Subtract it from everything else and there was little left but haircutting and open-heart surgery. The economy wasn't about “information” or buying and selling things on the Internet. It was about bulldozing 200 acres of red clay 38 miles outside Atlanta, plunking McHouses down on half-acre lots, tilting

## THE ECONOMY WASN'T ABOUT “INFORMATION.” IT WAS ABOUT BULLDOZING 200 ACRES OF RED CLAY 38 MILES OUTSIDE ATLANTA.

some time, they also led to an unfortunate intermezzo of complacency from the mid-1980s into the 2000s during which a world glut of oil briefly materialized, sending prices down as low as \$10 a barrel, in turn leading the American public to fall asleep over energy issues after deciding that the crises of the 1970s had been a shuck-and-jive by greedy oil companies colluding with Arab sheiks. In short, we tragically squandered the opportunity to remake the American Dream along less oil-addicted lines.

Instead, we shifted into party-hearty suburban turbo-development overdrive and elaborated with greater recklessness than ever on a hyper car-dependent living arrangement that was profitable to construct but which has exceedingly poor prospects as an armature for daily life in the decades to come. To make matters worse, we surrendered the bulk of our manufacturing economy to other nations with cheaper labor and fewer environmental scruples and actually made the doomed suburban expansion project, and all its ancillary activities such as mortgage-lending, real-estate sales, strip-mall commerce, and easy motoring, the new basis of our economy. This was the dirty secret of our economy from Reagan on: the creation of

up a programmed set of national chain retail outlets on the nearest “collector” highway, granting no-money-down interest-only mortgages to anyone with a pulse regardless of creditworthiness (or lack of), and then flipping those mortgages into yet more abstract tradable securitized debt instruments.

Thus, when the Tom Friedmans and David Brookses of the world beat the drum for the global economy, it is not clear whether they are really talking about international trade relations or the sleazy and destructive rackets that have insidiously replaced the formerly productive activity of the United States—especially insofar as the suburban project can be categorized as the greatest misallocation of resources in the history of the world precisely because it will be so valueless in the future.

It must be obvious, by the way, that this ominous shift from value-based economic activity to the short-term luxury lifestyle racket was supported by both major political parties. Bill Clinton was as much a booster for a suburban-development-based economy as Ronald Reagan or both Bushes—and in some ways, Clinton was more the pure product of a Wal-Mart society than the Republicans ever could be. Nor did Clinton's successors as Democratic presi-



dential candidates deviate from the program. Neither Al Gore nor John Kerry dared stand up against the destructive activities of the suburban “home-builders” or the idea that America might be imperiling its future by making such massive misinvestments in automobile dependency. Clinton, Gore, and Kerry were equal enthusiasts for the permanent offshoring of industry—in effect, the continued dismantling of America’s manufacturing base. (I write as a registered Democrat, incidentally.) None of them paid the slightest attention to the one task that might actually make a difference in America’s profligate oil consumption: rebuilding the passenger railroad system to something above its current Third World level of service.

\* \* \*

Readers may be justifiably eager to know just when exactly the global oil production peak might occur. There is some disagreement about this across the spectrum, but even that may be insignificant. Authorities such as the Department of Energy’s Energy Information Administration and the reporting service for the global oil industry, the International Energy Association, both considered shills for their sponsors, put peak way out around 2030. By any practical policy measure, that is not very far off—though it offers some false consolation for those who would like to avoid thinking about it now. More independent authorities, such as the Association for the Study of Peak Oil, led by eminent geologists such as Colin J. Campbell and Kenneth Deffeyes, retired from the oil “majors” and free to speak their minds, allege that we are at or near peak now. If indeed we are there, we will not know for sure until the production data dribble in and are parsed a year or so down the road.

One unimpeachable authority, Matthew Simmons, the leading U.S. investment banker to the drilling indus-

try, published a book this summer, *Twilight in the Desert*, saying that evidence indicates Saudi Arabia may have peaked. Saudi reserve figures—an estimate of what remains underground—have been considered state secrets for 30 years, since the Saud family nationalized Aramco. A telling symptom of trouble is the failure of Saudi Arabia to increase production to keep the price from ratcheting upward since 2004, despite repeated promises to do so. It would tend to mean there is absolutely no spare oil capacity left in the world that has been seeing stupendous industrial growth.

All this is why the hyper-optimistic view of the global economy as a permanent institution, as something we ought just to embrace and get used to, begins to seem so utterly preposterous. The global energy predicament has powerful implications. For instance, if the supply of oil cannot grow, then industrial economies based on oil (and with no ready substitutes) will not continue to grow. If industrial economies do not grow, then financial instruments generated to represent the expectation of growth—stocks, bonds, derivatives, and currencies—will lose credibility and thus value. Economies now functioning on less-than-reality-based expectations, such as America’s suburban housing bubble racket, modeled on supernatural credit creation and Ponzi-style multilayered debt fob-offs, will find themselves in a bewildering new world of default, loss, and ruin.

The geopolitical implications ought to be daunting too, and rather obvious. For instance, how do we suppose that China and the U.S. will continue to enjoy cozy trade relations at the same time they become desperate rivals contesting for control of the regions that possess the world’s dwindling oil supplies? One hardly need point out that the military struggle has already commenced, with the U.S. desperately running its Middle

East police station in Iraq, not to mention the Central Asian annexes in Afghanistan and several former Soviet Republics. (Both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have agitated for America to remove its bases, while China and Russia egg them on in the background.)

So far, China has stopped short of military adventuring, but they have sent agents scurrying around the world to secure oil-supply contracts with many of America’s leading suppliers, including Canada and Venezuela, and they are pursuing civil-engineering works all over Africa to forge happy future energy supply relations. China could walk into the oil-rich regions east of the Caspian if they were desperate enough. Would we oppose them? A land war with the Chinese army there would not be a project that America could feel confident about.

And that’s just China. Japan and India will have to import virtually all of their energy 10 years from now even to continue their current levels of industrial activity. Perhaps they will just stop. Despite a couple of terror bombings, Europe has pretty much had a free ride on geopolitics since 9/11, enjoying the benefit of America’s military exertions to stabilize the Middle East without having to make much more than a token contribution while reveling in a sense of moral superiority, even as they continue to enjoy regular tanker shipments of crucial oil via the Suez Canal. Europeans may seem effete and sclerotic in Beltway strategizing circles, but they are an economic force equal to the U.S., at least, and have the potential both to mobilize and to join in a lot of international military mischief if their survival is threatened.

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The peak oil situation implies that we will probably not be able to continue industrial-style agriculture based on

enormous inputs of oil and gas-based fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides, and all the fossil fuel associated with such varied tasks as large-scale irrigation and long-range transport. In short, we are going to have to grow a lot more of our food closer to home, on a smaller scale than that now practiced by Cargill, Archer Daniels Midland, and other contributors to the Cheez Doodle and Pepsi-Cola supply. The affluent (those who remain) will be eating far fewer Chilean grapes and tiger shrimp from Thailand.

It's my view that food production and the value-added activities associated with it will come closer to the center of the U.S. economy than they have in memory and at a far smaller and more local scale. Re-allocating land for food production is hardly as automatic or straightforward a process as it may seem. Right now, most of the best land proximate to towns and cities is either already paved over and built upon or valued solely for future suburban development. There will be furious resistance to rethinking that, a kind of cognitive dissonance overhang, as landowners, realtors, builders, and retail-store chains lie back awaiting the return of business as usual.

By the time Americans perceive that the energy problem and the associated food crisis is permanent, there may be desperate cries for the government to "do something." Like all mega-scaled enterprises, the federal government is apt to find itself underfunded and disabled by the sequence of difficulties entailed by the global energy predicament. My guess is that only local government will be effective and that its quality and character will vary from place to place.

Some regions of the country will not even be eligible for a transition from our current mode of life to something more consistent with reality. There is not going to be much local food production in Phoenix and Las Vegas, on top of the problems they will have with non-cheap

air-conditioning, non-easy motoring, and unavailable water. These places may be substantially depopulated 20 years from now. Even if eventually contested by a flow of desperate migrants from Mexico, these metroplexes will not support equivalent populations of any ethnic allegiance years from now.

Small-scale local agriculture will require more physical labor and animal traction in the decades ahead. This has large implications, in turn, for how our society is fundamentally organized or how turbulent it may become. Even the small minority thinking about these things cannot conjure a really credible outcome for the gigantic liability of existing suburbia. Some speculate that the denizens of suburban hot-spots like Cherokee County, Georgia, or northern New Jersey will just live off the gardens on their half-acre lots. Visions like this tend to overlook the other potential failures of suburbia, such as the lack of civic cohesion, the prospects for disorder, and the sheer physical template of sprawl, which turns any two-mile walk into the Bataan Death March.

The permanent global energy crisis will create a large new class of economic losers in the U.S.—the former middle class. A lot of vocational niches are going to disappear and will not come back. Incomes will be lost forever. Members of the former middle class will be angry, resentful, and bewildered by the loss of their entitlements to the American Dream and are apt to chafe at the prospect of becoming agricultural workers. It is impossible to predict what kind of maniacs they may vote for or what their relations might be like with those who manage to continue owning land, except to say that Americans are not so exceptional that they are immune to the social upheavals that typically occur when the mainstream of any society is placed under unprecedented stress.

These issues aren't even on our charts. Our lack of seriousness is impressive.

\* \* \*

The shocking conclusion to all this is that we are in for an epochal period of contraction and strife around the world. Industrial economies are likely to wither in the aftermath of peak oil. Scams and rackets that are allowing us to get by now—the extraordinary credit binge of American consumers, the alchemical generation of sub-prime mortgages, and the casino-like operation of hedge funds—will cease to work their magic in a world faced with reality-based hardship and scarcity. The meta-trend in the post-peak-oil world will be the desperate re-localizing and downsizing of all our activities. All things organized at the greatest scale, including global corporations, giant universities, centralized governments, will be weakened, in many cases fatally. Wal-Mart, with its "warehouse on wheels," will expire quickly.

We will be challenged to rebuild complex local networks of economic interdependency, and it will not be easy. The destruction of local communities already wreaked by the big chains has been so comprehensive that it may take decades even to pick up the pieces. There will be far fewer things to buy, and shopping will fade into the background of life. The airline industry as we know it will cease to exist and cars will be, at the least, a much-diminished presence in our lives. Those who believe that life will continue to be an international blue-light special of perpetual bargain shopping are going to be disappointed. The world is about to become a larger place again. ■

*James Howard Kunstler is the author of The Long Emergency, published by the Atlantic Monthly Press.*

# Volunteer Statesman

Congressman John Duncan, antiwar Republican and authentic conservative

By Bill Kauffman

"DON'T YELP with the pack," William James adjured his students when Spanish-American War fever overtook the Republic.

Hard enough advice for young people to follow, but nearly impossible for most politicians. So when we find a member of Congress smart and brave enough to break from the pack, let us sing his praises so loudly that we drown out the jingo jangles—if not the cries of anguish by American and Iraqi mothers whose sons are dying because too many men and women who knew better yelped with the pack.

John J. "Jimmy" Duncan Jr. of Tennessee was one of the noble sextet of House Republicans who voted against the Iraq War. (The others were Ron Paul, John Hostettler, Amory Houghton, Jim Leach, and Connie Morella.)

The vote, Duncan says as we chat in his Capitol Hill office, was "a tough one for me. I have a very conservative Republican district. My Uncle Joe is one of the most respected judges in Tennessee; when I get in a really serious bind I go to him for advice. I had breakfast with him and my two closest friends and all three told me that I had to vote for the war. It's the only time in my life that I've ever gone against my Uncle Joe's advice. When I pushed that button to vote against the war back in 2002, I thought I might be ending my political career."

He wasn't. Congressman Duncan has won almost 80 percent of the vote in both elections subsequent to his vote against Mr. Bush's war. Not all acts of political courage are suicide.

On the wall of Jimmy Duncan's Knoxville office hangs a framed quotation from Janet Ayer Fairbank's 1930 political novel *The Lions' Den*: "No matter how the espousal of a lost cause might hurt his prestige in the House, Zimmer had never hesitated to identify himself with it if it seemed to him to be right. He knew only two ways: the right one and the wrong, and if he made a mistake, it was never one of honor: He voted as he believed he should, and although sometimes his voice was raised alone on one side of a question, it was never stifled."

It is a principled maverick's credo, though Duncan's own maverick streak is really an adherence to pre-imperial conservative principles. He is a Robert Taft Republican in a party whose profligate and bellicose foreign policy today melds the worst features of Nelson Rockefeller and Wendell Willkie.

Jimmy Duncan's paternal grandparents were small farmers in Scott County, which in 1861 left Tennessee, refusing to follow the Volunteer State into the Confederacy, and declared itself "the Free and Independent state of Scott."

Duncan is a free and independent member of Congress as well as that even rarer specimen in modern American politics: a man who knows his place, which in this case is Knoxville, Tennessee. His father, John Duncan Sr., "hitchhiked into Knoxville with five dollars in his pocket," and after an education at the University of Tennessee was elected mayor of Knoxville and then congressman.

Duncan's father was also co-owner of the Knoxville Smokies of minor league baseball's Sally League, and Jimmy grew up breathing the invigorating American air of pine tar and resin bags and concession-stand hot dogs. He was a batboy, a ball shagger, scoreboard operator, and, as a freshman at the University of Tennessee, the Smokies' public-address announcer. (Perhaps a boyhood spent in the minors equipped Duncan with the valuable faculty to discern the insidious way in which this war, like all wars, is making our country less neighborly, less American, less minor-league. It is the minors, after all, with their communal atmosphere, grassroots base, and good-natured acceptance of eccentricity, that represent the best of America. The major leagues—TV-driven, impersonal, corporate, and arrogant—are a sport suitable for American Empire.)

This congressional district has been represented by a Duncan since his father's election in 1964, the year Jimmy, a teenaged Goldwater enthusiast, rode a train for 77 hours to the San Francisco convention to serve as an honorary assistant sergeant-at-arms.

"My Dad was the hardest-working and kindest man I have ever known," he states. "I was very close to him, and very proud of him, but I am sure he has rolled over in his grave at some of my votes because he went straight down the line with the Republican leadership."

I ask Jimmy Duncan how his views on war, peace, and military intervention have changed since he was elected in 1984. "I've become convinced that most



of these wars have been brought about because of a desire for money and power and prestige," he says. "I supported the first Gulf War because I went to all those briefings and heard Colin Powell and all of them say that Saddam Hussein was a threat to the entire Middle East. I saw his troops surrendering to CNN camera crews and I became convinced that the threat had been greatly exaggerated."

Duncan was not going to be fooled again. As Bush II readied his war, "I was called down to the White House for a briefing with Condoleezza Rice and George Tenet and John McLaughlin. I asked, 'How much is Saddam Hussein's total military budget?' It was a little over two-tenths of one percent of ours. He was no threat to us whatsoever. He hadn't attacked us. He hadn't threatened to attack us. He wasn't capable of attacking us." The U.S. invasion, he says, was "like the University of Tennessee football team taking on a second-grade football team—it's unbelievable."

The war has enshrined foreign aid—once a conservative *bête noire*—as a virtual sacrament of the 21st-century Washington Republican. Duncan notes that the U.S. is draining its treasury into Iraq to "rebuild roads, sewers, powerplants, railroads" and subsidize a "small business loan program, prisons, a witness protection program, free medical care. ... I've said all along that the war in Iraq was going to mean massive foreign aid and huge deficit spending."

"When I was called down to that briefing at the White House," recalls Duncan, "Lawrence Lindsey had just said a war would cost between \$100 and \$200 billion. I asked about that. Condoleezza Rice said no, it wouldn't cost anywhere close to that—and now we're going to be at \$300 billion by the end of September."

Like a voice from conservatism past—he has observed that "We need more Calvin Coolidges in our govern-

ment today"—Duncan says, "There is no one I talk to on either side who can tell me how we're going to be able to pay all the Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, military pensions, civil-service pensions, the trillion dollar prescription drug benefit ... the money's just not there."

Duncan rejects the cant and tripe that served as the rhetorical fig leaves for shock and awe: "It's ridiculous to say they're a threat to us because they 'hate our freedom.' They don't hate our freedom. They hate our policies in the Middle East. I believe very strongly in national defense, I just don't believe in international defense. I don't believe we can take on the defense problems of the whole world."

"I'm pro-military," he says, "but you can't give any department or agency in the federal government a blank check. Eisenhower warned us against the military-industrial complex. He would be astounded by how far we've gone down that path. My goodness, we're spending as much as all other countries of the world combined on defense spending—and they always want more." Duncan reckons that the defense budget could be cut by \$100 billion. But then by "defense" he means "defense." Consider, by contrast, the unintentionally illuminating remark of Congressman Dan Burton (R-Ind.), chairman of the House Government Reform Committee, who called the Department of Homeland Security "a Defense Department for the United States, if you will." Think on that one for a while—or at least until the Thought Police start knocking at your door.

Duncan ascribes Republican support for the war to the straitjacketing exigencies of party loyalty—that is, the subordination of one's critical judgment to the demands of Team Red and Team Blue. (As if the spectrum contained no other colors! And since when do we allow television networks to paint our lovely land in only two hues?) "Eighty percent of the

House Republicans voted against the bombings in Bosnia, Kosovo, and all that," he points out. "I'm absolutely convinced that if Gore or Clinton had been in the White House, 80 percent of the Republicans would have been against this, too."

Jimmy Duncan has that quality that is drained out of most politicians, whose characteristic temporizing and trimming induce an almost paralytic timidity. That is to say, he has guts. He speaks his mind and he votes his conscience. "I've had a lot of members privately tell me they wish they had voted against the war, but they don't want to vocally oppose the president," says Duncan, who adds, "I like President Bush. But whoever is president, there is great pressure to get involved in all these situations around the world. A president always gets more credit than he deserves for a good economy and more blame than he deserves for a bad economy. So with each passing year, all presidents gravitate more toward foreign policy. They all want to go down in history as World Statesmen."

"I hate for this to be considered a 'conservative war,'" grieves Duncan, whose credentials date back to when he "sent my first paycheck as a bagboy at the A&P grocery store to the Barry Goldwater campaign," for "the traditional conservative position is against this war." He dismisses the war's neoconservative instigators as "big-government conservatives" who "keep wanting to expand federal power and put Big Brother into an even more powerful position."

Duncan concedes that the Republicans have become a party of Big Government, but he sees no sign that the flaccid party of putative opposition is about to undergo a Jeffersonian metamorphosis. "The Democrats almost without exception want us to spend more money on everything," he says, adding that "the Democrats would have supported the war" had it been waged by Gore or Clinton.

The three leading House Republican voices for withdrawal—Duncan, Ron Paul, and Walter Jones of North Carolina—are all Southerners, and if they are not a GOP Antiwar Caucus they are the harbingers—one hopes—of an eventual debate within the Republican Party between the imperialists and those who love America for her own sake.

If Jimmy Duncan is a throwback in search of a party of peace and frugality, he is, even more, a glorious anachronism as a representative of a place and a people. Unlike almost every other member of Congress, Duncan writes his own newsletters—“every word”—and he writes them on legal pads in long-hand, for he proudly admits to being a “holdout” from the mousy tyranny of Microsoft. “I do not use, and do not worship, the computer,” he says. “One of my goals is to get to the end of my career without ever learning how to turn on a computer.” The technophiles of the Republican Opportunity Society need not come knocking at Duncan’s door.

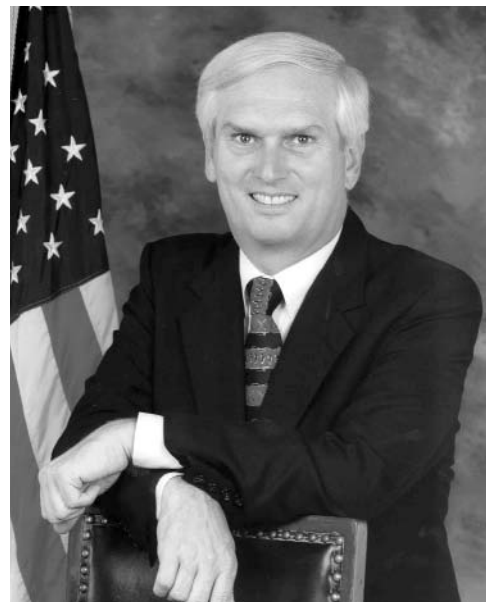
Duncan’s newsletters contain none of the usual taxpayer-funded self-aggrandizement. They are at once chatty, ruminative, and informative: letters to the folks back home from a small-r republican. Instead of vapid happy talk, he writes, “I hope more of my fellow conservatives will soon wake up and realize that an unnecessary war and a greatly exaggerated threat of terrorism are being used to expand government at a faster rate than any time in our history.” He muses about the ways in which computers sever people from their communities; he criticizes the Patriot Act and No Child Left Behind; he praises the Tenth Amendment and the civic-minded citizens of Knoxville. He urges the University of Tennessee to hire professors who are able to speak recognizable English. He is, in short, an intelligent, patriotic small-city American who finds himself in Congress during a topsy-turvy age

when down is up, imperialist bullies masquerade as “conservatives,” and dissent is treason.

Duncan operates from a base of principles—rooted, localist American—that gives his views a freshness, a vitality. What others accept without a second thought he sees for its underlying wickedness. He has, for instance, criticized the fetish for “national searches” to fill government jobs in Tennessee. He sounds just the right note of angry local pride: “I think possibly that some people in East Tennessee have been teased so much that they have developed unjustified inferiority complexes. There are good, well-qualified people for every job living right in East Tennessee. We should not fall for the old myth that an expert is someone with a briefcase 500 miles from home.”

His brand of conservative Republicanism is straight out of Robert Taft, with a dollop of LaFollettian populism. “Traditionally, conservatives have been for small government, they’ve been supported by small farmers, small business,” he says. “Now what you have is this big government-big business duopoly,” through which “big business gets government contracts, favorable tax rules, and all these things small businesses don’t get.” Thus he is a vocal critic of corporate welfare ranging from the space station (“the biggest boondoggle in the history of Congress”) to the imposition of the metric system (a project of “multinational companies” scornful of American uniqueness).

Duncan annually rates among the most parsimonious House members in the report cards of the National Taxpayers Union. A fair-minded chairman of the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee, he is liked and respected by the Democrats, even though he routinely votes against welfare-state programs they believe to be incised in Mosesian stone.



He is an antiwar conservative, a Tennessee decentralist, a Republican critic of globalization because, to reclaim a fine word, he cherishes diversity: “I do not favor one-world solutions to our problems, in part because I hope this world never becomes a dull, bland, homogenized place where everyone has to be and think and act alike.” This belief in human-scale institutions, in the blooming of a thousand flowers, motivates Duncan’s promotion of small schools and his sharp criticism of the consolidation movement, which herded children into the anonymity of the centralized superschool, which has plenty of computers but no heart or soul. He cosponsored the Smaller Schools Initiative, an attempt to break large schools into manageable pieces, for as he says—and these words should be spraypainted upon the Department of Education building just moments before it is blasted to that white elephant’s graveyard in the sky—“Children are better off going to a small school in an old building, as long as it is clean and safe, than to a brand-new, gigantic school where few people know who they are.” Again, Duncan acts as the voice of the truer, more honorable, organic conservatism. Just because the Bush Republicans have repudiated Middle American conservatism doesn’t mean that Jimmy Duncan forgets.

I suggest to Duncan that he would make a fine antiwar candidate for the 2008 GOP presidential nomination. Surely there are still Republicans who care

about limited, decentralized governance within a constitutional republic and who would rally to Duncan's blend of front-porch antiwar patriotism, Scots-Irish Presbyterian rectitude, East Tennessee pride, and taxpayer-watchdog populism. He laughs. "I'm not going to get in any race that I don't have a good chance of winning. I would certainly be one of the most unusual candidates," he allows, "but I would get slaughtered." Oh well. Duncan in '08 still sounds mighty good to me.

When it comes time to retire, Jimmy Duncan will not whore himself out as a lobbyist, one of those pathetic specters who haunt the halls of Congress dunning favors from colleagues who will cross the street to avoid them. "I want to go home to Knoxville and play with my grandkids," he says. Wanna bet that he follows through?

Duncan is a great American because he is a great Tennessean. Healthy patriotism is rooted in the love of the local, of the small, of the particular, be it East Tennessee, West Kansas, or Greenwich Village. Thus Duncan eschews think-tank clichés and offers, in one sentence, the most concise analysis I have ever heard of Al Gore's malady: "None of his four kids went to school one day of their lives in Tennessee." (Adds Duncan: "One thing I'm proud of is all of our four kids have gone to school every day of their lives in Tennessee.")

This kind of regional patriotism, this feeling for one's home state, is so far outside the experience of the Washington neoconservatives as to make a man like Jimmy Duncan seem as foreign to them as, well, minor-league baseball and small farms. But Congressman Duncan's America is still out here. And some of those boys in the minors can hit. ■

*Bill Kauffman's most recent book is Dispatches from the Muckdog Gazette. His Look Homeward, America is due from ISI Books in Spring 2006.*

## What's in a Name?

Fighting Irish, yes. Fighting Sioux, no.

**By Steve Sailer**

ALTHOUGH SPORTSWRITERS like to present themselves as bluff, call-'em-as-they-see-'em regular guys, they are remarkably prone to forming high-tech lynch mobs when a sports figure violates the reigning norms of political correctness. For example, Fighting Irish football legend Paul Hornung suggested in 2003 that to compete better with less academic colleges, the University of Notre Dame should offer black athletes more affirmative action. A firestorm of journalistic indignation cost Hornung his radio job.

Yet the National Collegiate Athletic Association's recent *diktat* that college "mascots, nicknames or images deemed hostile or abusive in terms of race, ethnicity or national origin" be banned from NCAA tournaments (such as the big money March Madness basketball tourney) was so laughable that many sportswriters dared snipe at it in print.

For example, scribes pointed out that the NCAA's *pronunciamento* only applied to 18 colleges with American Indian team names, such as the Florida State Seminoles. Yet the council of the Florida Seminole tribe had given formal permission to the university in return for scholarships, a Seminole museum on campus, and other benefits.

Some columnists noted that proscribing the team name of the runner-up in the 2005 basketball tournament, the Fighting Illini, could cause problems since the entire University of Illinois's name stemmed from the tribe, not to mention the state itself.

By this logic—such as it is—isn't "Indiana University" inherently offen-

sive? And while I don't exactly know what a "Hoosier" is, it sure sounds like it must be hostile or abusive to somebody.

More than a few sportswriters observed that the most beloved nickname in college sports, the Fighting Irish of Notre Dame, a university so popular that the NCAA had contractually awarded it uniquely favorable treatment in football bowl game bids, is a blatant ethnic stereotype. Indeed, Notre Dame's famed mascot is a hostile and obviously alcohol-abusive leprechaun putting his dukes up. Irish-American comedian George Carlin once observed that he had the feeling Notre Dame had come close to naming its teams the "Drunken, Thick-Skulled, Brawling, Short-D\*\*\*\*\* Irish." Still, Notre Dame's appellation is A-OK with the NCAA.

Nonetheless, from the NCAA's institutional perspective, its ban on Indian team names might actually turn out to be a rather clever bureaucratic ploy.

As *Sports Illustrated's* S.L. Price noted, "Although Native American activists are virtually united in opposition to the use of Indian nicknames and mascots, the Native American population sees the issue far differently." A 2002 poll of 352 Native Americans found that 81 percent approved of college and high-school sports programs using Indian nicknames.

Of course, the NCAA hardly cares what the average American Indian thinks. What plagues the organization are the Native American activists, led by the National Coalition on Racism in Sports and Media, which is a subsidiary of the



old 1970s radical organization, the American Indian Movement.

Although individual universities like Florida State can work out deals with local tribal governments for naming rights, the NCAA is pestered by free-floating ideologues like the NCRSM. I suspect the NCAA leadership thinks it's double-crossing those annoying Indian activists, rendering them irrelevant by abolishing the offending Indian nicknames. As Stalin might have said if he'd been an NCAA functionary, "No mascot, no problem."

The sad fact is that getting rid of Indian team names won't improve the cultural standing of Native Americans, which has been fading since the 1960s.

Protestors often argue, "Think how shocking it would be if some school had been calling its teams the Negroes since, oh, 1911!" It would be surprising if some college had long cheered for, say, the Fighting Fulanis precisely because anti-black racism was once so monolithic. In contrast, whites, on the whole, long held profoundly mixed emotions about American Indians.

## MODERN BOYS SUBJECTED TO **SCHOOLROOM CANT** ASSUME THAT AMERICAN INDIANS MUST HAVE BEEN TOTAL WIMPS AND GO BACK TO LISTENING TO 50 CENT.

The more conservative politicians, such as King George III's ministers before the Revolution and the Federalist Chief Justice John Marshall in the 1830s, somewhat sympathized with the Indians against the settlers. The more democratic politicians, though, such as Andy Jackson, who waged the first two Seminole Wars, wanted to give the common man what he desired: the Indians' land. Yet even white settlers were alternately outraged and impressed by how bravely the Indians resisted their onslaught.

While "one drop of black blood" made a part-white-part-black person subject

to enslavement or later Jim Crow, millions of Americans boasted of Indian ancestors, such as Herbert Hoover's vice president, Charles Curtis, who spoke the native Kansa language before learning English.

After the Boy Scouts of America began in 1910, Indian Lore quickly became one of the most popular merit badges, and the most dedicated boys were rewarded by membership in the Scouts' honor society, the Indian-themed Order of the Arrow.

Of course, back then whites admired Native Americans for virtues that are now suspect: manliness, ferocity, bravery, stoicism, self-sacrifice, taciturnity, and dignity. The feminist and civil-rights revolutions introduced new social ideals that made Oprah Winfrey—emotional, glib, self-absorbed, and shameless—the prototypical modern American. In this new cultural environment, where Bill Clinton promised to "feel your pain," American Indians, whose elders taught them to try not to feel even their own pain, grew increasingly irrelevant. The role models of today's American youth

are rappers, who embody the verbosity and braggadocio that Indians abhorred.

Since we pay so little attention to the real merits of Indians anymore, it's been easy for us to invent fantasies depicting them as fashionable Noble Savages. Schools try to propagandize kids into believing that Indians were ecologists and, hilariously, feminists. (Tellingly, the secretary-treasurer of the activist NCRSM is Anita Hill of the Clarence Thomas confirmation brouhaha.)

For true believers in the new conventional wisdom about Indians, nicknames like the University of North Dakota's

"Fighting Sioux" sound like racist stereotypes. Who could imagine a Sioux ever doing something so patriarchal and dead-white-European-male-ish as fighting? Well, Crazy Horse and George Armstrong Custer could.

Not surprisingly, modern boys subjected to schoolroom cant assume that American Indians must have been total wimps and go back to listening to 50 Cent rap about how many millions he's making. Thus, in at least a small way, the linkage of Indians with widely idolized sports teams helps preserve the otherwise evaporating glamour of Native Americans.

One way to mobilize the elected leadership of the Indian nations against the NCRSM radicals would be for Congress to assign the intellectual property rights in tribe names to formally recognized Indian tribes such as the Seminoles. It's reasonable for them to profit from the valuable reputation their ancestors earned through their bravery and fierceness.

A grandfather clause for existing trade names like the Florida State Seminoles or the Jeep Grand Cherokee could apply for, say, a decade. After that, marketers would have to negotiate royalty payments with the tribe's council. Indian nations could deny their trademarks to sleazy operators. Conversely, to attract desirable licensees, some tribes would no doubt hire talented PR firms to promote and polish their forefathers' images. This would enhance awareness of America's ancient Indian heritage, whereas the NCAA's ban threatens to stuff it further down the memory hole.

Best of all, this reform would defuse racially divisive political controversies by turning them into simple business propositions. ■

*Steve Sailer is TAC's film critic and the Monday morning columnist for VDARE.com.*

# Beyond Abortion

Pro-lifers branch out to poverty, health care—and war.

By W. James Antle III

OPPONENTS OF ABORTION have grown accustomed to ridicule from the other side. While placard-sized taunts like “get your rosaries off my ovaries” are easy to dismiss, Congressman Barney Frank’s famous quip that antiabortion activists “believe life begins at conception and ends at birth” stings. Charges of indifference to life outside the womb have helped force a debate on what it truly means to be pro-life.

Pro-lifers often face hostile questions about the depth of their commitment to the unborn children they wish to protect from abortion. Do they favor free prenatal care? Do they support using their tax dollars to provide health insurance for mother and child? A similar litany of questions comes up when discussing opposition to euthanasia at the other end of life. Who is going to care for all these sick old people—the National Right to Life Committee?

The interrogation inevitably turns to the movement’s alliance with proponents of low taxes and limited government on the Right. Syndicated columnist Mark Shields, a pro-life liberal, complained to *U.S. Catholic* magazine, “We’ve got people who are against abortions, but, given a choice between funding Women and Infant Care (WIC) and cutting taxes, would choose to cut taxes.”

Some pro-lifers have concluded that the best answer is to get new allies. The case against abortion and euthanasia rests on certain premises about the intrinsic value of the human person that are applicable to other issues as well. Those engaged in rethinking the right-

to-life label range from antiabortion liberals to neoconservatives making a pro-life case for war.

Thus, Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, writing in *Books and Culture* (essentially an evangelical *New York Review of Books*), concede “pro-life is often shorthand for a stand against abortion” but contend that “thoughtful pro-life Christians (both evangelical and Catholic) also advocate care for the aging, medical care for the poor, adequate housing for all, and compassionate standards for immigration.” The group Consistent Life lists poverty and racism as pillar concerns alongside abortion, advocating “a coherent social policy which seeks to protect the rights of the weakest and most vulnerable in our society, the unborn, the infirm, the refugee, the homeless, and the poor.”

Immigration, housing, and health care aren’t issues usually associated with the conventional Left-Right abortion debate, but some see them as cutting-edge topics for a new pro-life movement shorn of its conservative image. Feminists for Life—an organization in the news lately because Supreme Court nominee John Roberts’s wife has been an advisor—promotes the idea that women’s equality and public compassion are necessary to move the debate beyond “making abortion illegal to making it unthinkable.”

Many pro-lifers who seek to expand their focus beyond abortion subscribe to what is called the “consistent life ethic,” which folds antiabortion views into a larger context of nonviolence, espousing “social justice” and opposi-

tion to most wars. Its adherents include columnist Nat Hentoff, actor Martin Sheen, and the Dalai Lama.

The late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin in 1983 began arguing that opposition to war, capital punishment, euthanasia, and abortion fit together in a “seamless garment” of pro-life issues. The seamless garment concept was popular with Catholic and Protestant thinkers who mixed theological conservatism with political liberalism but has not gained universal acceptance within the pro-life movement. One of the rare politicians who championed the idea was the late Pennsylvania Gov. Robert Casey, an economically progressive Democrat who argued that protection for the unborn was consistent with the “widening circle of democracy” that extended rights to the poor, women, and racial minorities. Some more socially liberal seamless-garment exponents would include gay rights in this list.

As a practical matter, it is easy to see how such views would drive a wedge between pro-lifers and their conservative allies. Critics of the seamless garment ideal argue that it gives liberal Democrats a pass on abortion by elevating other issues. Therefore, the argument goes, pro-life Catholics would still feel justified in voting for pro-choice Ted Kennedy because of his opposition to the Iraq War and the death penalty.

Perhaps the most audacious and improbable attempt to re-brand the pro-life movement was undertaken by Joseph Bottum in *First Things*, the high-brow religious-conservative journal of which he is now editor. Bottum inverted

the logic of the nonviolent consistent life ethic to argue that the “new fusionism” in American politics inextricably linked pro-lifers to supporters of the Iraq War and neoconservatives more generally.

In terms of electoral politics, Bottum’s portrayal is certainly closer to the mark than the Seamless Garment Network’s. The so-called values voters, most of whom are pro-life, and people who favored President Bush’s interventionist post-9/11 foreign policy together formed the basis of the 2004 Republican majority. Social conservatives are the largest mass constituency on the Right; any dominant conservatism, like the supply-siders of the 1980s and budget-balancers of the 1990s, needs their support. But Bottum does not stop with this uncontested political reality. He argues for the ideological compatibility of opposition to abortion and what he calls “the remoralization of foreign policy.”

“The opponents of abortion and euthanasia insist there are truths about human life and dignity that must not be compromised in domestic politics,” Bottum wrote. “The opponents of Islamofascism and rule by terror insist there are truths about human life and dignity that must not be compromised in international politics.”

Juxtaposing Cardinal Bernardin’s consistent life ethic with Bottum’s seamless garment of moral interventionism, one can begin to appreciate the limitations of the otherwise admirable tendency to apply pro-life principles to an ever-widening number of debates. The additional issues can end up undermining the pro-life project rather than reinforcing it.

Opposition to the shedding of innocent blood is a moral question, but attempts to order society and international relations justly often turn on prudential questions. One can agree that if human life is too sacred to be snuffed out by the abortionist that there is also an obligation to care for the children

who thus enter the world. But it doesn’t necessarily follow that the welfare state, especially as constituted before the mid-1990s welfare reform in this country, is the best means to this end.

Similarly, the dignity of human life that is violated by abortion and euthanasia is also affronted by tyranny and oppression. But it does not follow that the proper corrective is U.S. war on a massive scale to effect regime change in oppressive countries.

In recent years, pro-lifers have awakened to the fact that opposing abortion requires more than lobbying for legal restrictions. It also requires compassionate treatment of women and children and efforts to make the horrible option of abortion seem unnecessary. This is a weighing of means and ends.

But as pro-lifers have tried to broaden their focus to issues far removed from abortion, they have often sidestepped questions about means in pursuit of noble ends. Food, health care, and employment for all are each worthwhile goals. But serious thought is required about the means, especially given decades of evidence regarding the failures of welfare statism and socialism.

Let’s go back to the skeptical questions people tend to direct toward pro-lifers. In each case, the possibility that people may be a burden on the taxpayer is implicitly raised as a reason to allow them to die. The critics may be asking about pro-life consistency, but they aren’t offering to bear these burdens themselves. To put it another way: would taxing such people to finance health care produce more Terri Schiavos or fewer?

The shortcomings of Bottum’s pro-life case for pre-emptive war are more obvious. Even the best-intentioned military conflicts, aimed at dethroning the worst despots and undertaken with scrupulous efforts to avoid civilian casualties, exact a significant cost in

innocent life. The human cost of trying to bring democracy to the Middle East—if democracy would even be the outcome—could be staggering.

What has the Iraq War taught Americans about the sanctity of human life? Perhaps foreign-policy intellectuals and magazine writers favored the overthrow of Saddam Hussein because of some deep concern for Iraqi human dignity. But many voters backed the invasion because they saw the Twin Towers fall and the Pentagon burn, and they wanted to avenge the victims. As Bottum himself described a comparable sentiment in a subsequent *First Things* piece on capital punishment, “blood cries out from the ground.” It’s difficult to imagine any significant public support for the war apart from the Sept. 11 attacks.

The conflict has hardly lent itself to humanizing Iraqis. The images of brutalized naked men being forced into human pyramids at Abu Ghraib, persistent allegations of torture that have sullied the reputations of our men and women in uniform, and even casual talk at home from some quarters about bombs and the use of nuclear weapons—if this constitutes the “remoralization of foreign policy,” one shudders to contemplate the less moral alternative.

If the near-pacifism of seamless garment seems divorced from the reality of our dangerous world, the idea of war as a life-affirming event is divorced from certain realities of human nature. Wars can be necessary and just, but they seldom end up promoting the human dignity of the enemy, much less fostering a recognizably pro-life ethic.

The welcome realization that pro-lifers must focus on more than the enactment of abortion restrictions is likely to enhance the movement’s moral credibility. So would allowing prudence to assume a larger role in pro-life strategic and social thinking. ■



# **AMERICA IS NO LONGER COMPETITIVE**

***We are now living mostly on our accumulated wealth  
-- and squandering it***

**A**merica is no longer competitive. We are importing more, producing less, and selling off our assets to pay for our standard of living. We are living off wealth accumulated from 1945 - 1970 so we are still able to live well. All the while, we have no plan to generate new wealth and are being economically destroyed by foreign countries, which have an active campaign to develop their economies at the expense of our future and our security. These issues are not being addressed because most Americans are still living well and not feeling any pain. We have become preoccupied with military defense throughout the Cold War and beyond and have disregarded the protection of our economy and our national industry. This time, we cannot afford to wait for another Pearl Harbor or September 11th to recognize the danger of an Economic War we are unknowingly involved in - and losing.

Despite the rose-colored GDP, unemployment, job creation, productivity, consumer spending, and income figures, here is what is truly happening to the country. The following are facts, not opinion:

## **1. AMERICA SELLING OUT**

### **Irresponsible sale of key strategic US companies & industries to foreign ownership**

8,600 US companies totaling \$1.3 Trillion sold to foreign interests in last 10 years. (e.g. Chrysler, Amoco & Arco Oil)

## **2. INDUSTRIAL COLLAPSE**

### **Loss or decline of major industries; foreign control or foreign ownership of our industries such as:**

Transportation equipment - 27% foreign controlled; Chemical manufacturing - 30%; Machinery manufacturing - 32%; Financial services - 36%; Plastics & rubber manufacturing - 47%; Cement industry - 81%; Motion pictures - 69%; Consumer television/electronics - nearly 100%... and our Auto Industry is relentlessly sliding into foreign hands.

## **3. LOSS OF GOOD JOBS**

### **Loss of good jobs, replaced with low-paying services jobs**

- Loss of 4 Million (22%) high-paying manufacturing jobs in the past 10 years.
- High-tech services jobs only account for 3% of total US employment in 2004, whereas manufacturing employment, which directly accounted for 15% in 1994, now accounts for 10%.
- Real average hourly wages after inflation have only grown 1% per year over the last 10 years.

## **4. GLOBALLY UNCOMPETITIVE**

### **Uncompetitiveness in manufacturing**

- 22.4% disadvantage in cost of production over our foreign competitors due to external overhead from items like counter productive taxes, health & pension benefits, tort litigation, regulation and compliance - these added costs are nearly equal to the total production costs in China.

- For example, General Motors spends \$1,500 more per vehicle than foreign competitors for health and pension benefits.

## **5. AMERICA NOW ECONOMICALLY DEFENSELESS**

### **America is a free market for foreigners to easily dominate**

Now for the first time in our history, we have opened ourselves to compete directly with non-market subsidized, protected, low-wage economies, and through "free trade," removed all of our economic defenses making it impossible for American free enterprise to flourish and compete through American production.

## **6. RECORD TRADE DEFICITS**

### **Unlimited trade deficits transferring US assets to foreign control with no alarm**

- Wealth transfer to foreign ownership of \$1.8 billion dollars per day thru balance of trade deficit, which equates to \$1,250,000 per minute of US assets flowing to foreign countries.
- Buying foreign cars and Christmas lights and paying with title to our factories.

## **7. FREE TRADE DISASTER**

### **One-sided so-called free trade forces American industry to outsource to survive**

- Subordinating our US Congress to the World Trade Organization, which is the final arbiter of trade disputes.
- Putting our workforce in unprotected competition with penny-wage countries like Mexico and China whose minimum wages are 1/10th that of the United States - left with no choice but to outsource.
- Other countries quietly use low-wages, underhanded

**Learn how to help raise awareness at: [www.EconomyInCrisis.org](http://www.EconomyInCrisis.org)**

subsidies, currency manipulation, technology transfer requirements, joint-venture requirements, customs policies, and other "trade weapons" to turn a so-called "free trade" agreement into an utter disaster for American industry.

## **8. DANGEROUS DEBT TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES**

### **Foreign countries financing our US Government**

- 99% of the US Federal Deficit was financed by foreign investors in 2004.
- This makes it impossible for the US Government to refuse a request of another country to buy our companies or our industry. These countries have tremendous leverage over our government.

## **9. FORCED OUTSOURCING**

### **Forced manufacturing & services outsourcing**

- US policies that put American industries in direct unprotected competition with foreign non-market economies mean that we are competing against subsidized, low-wage, restricted market countries. The result is outsourcing to survive.
- Dismantling America's industrial base - giving away our technology and jobs to foreign companies and having them produce for us in their country.

## **10. DESTRUCTIVE INSOURCING**

### **Insourcing foreign production to give us jobs and a minimal tax base**

- Subsidizing foreign companies to operate in America for their benefit and their profit, quickly displacing and putting out of business our American owned factories, leaving us with shell factories whose job is primarily assembling imported components.
- For example, 62 Japanese & 67 European manufacturing companies in Central Ohio according to Columbus Chamber of Commerce.
- These insourcing companies are mostly assembly and do not equip Americans with knowledge or technological know-how, which is mostly reserved for the plants in the foreign countries. This artificially inflates our productivity figures, while the benefits accrue to the foreign owners, who also ship profits and taxes back overseas, while receiving massive federal and state incentives to locate here.

## **11. FOREIGN LOBBYING**

### **Foreign lobbying in Washington and US officials working for foreign interests**

- Foreign countries spent \$620 Million in Washington lobbying for free-trade, tax incentives, and contracts from 1998-2004.

- 47% of US Trade Representative officials left to lobby for foreign interests after leaving government service during the 1980's.
- Two of the most recent head US Trade Representatives had family who were in the paid employment of, or registered foreign agents of Japan (Carla Hills & Charlene Barshefsky).

## **12. DEBT ECONOMY**

### **US economy now built on mostly debt**

- Personal savings rates as low as during the Great Depression, and credit levels are at all time highs - personal, Government, and trade deficit.
- Tax cuts that put money into the economy with borrowed money are not being spent on investment, but on consumption of foreign goods, driving the trade deficit even higher.
- From 2001 - 2004, \$330 Billion in home equity was pulled out and spent (near zero personal savings rate). In 2005, anticipated to pull out \$160 Billion. This is a one-time cash infusion because of low interest rates that is largely being squandered on perishable consumer goods.

## **13. NOTHING MORE THAN A MARKET**

### **US should not be an economy of purely 300 Million consumers - we must be producers first to be able to continue to consume**

At present we are living off our accumulated wealth generated while the rest of the world was in ruins following WWII. If we continue to make decisions purely for the lowest price without regard to insuring that we can continue to be a productive country, we will eventually run out of assets to pay for these goods.

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**Send this to your friends, as a letter to your local newspaper editor, and to your Congressperson.**

# **ECONOMY IN CRISIS**

CREATING AWARENESS OF OUR TRUE ECONOMIC CONDITION

# War Within Limits

How we conduct an armed conflict is as important as why we fight.

By Douglas J. Milewski

IN THE SURRENDER CEREMONIES at the close of the Second World War, Gen. Douglas MacArthur observed that the central crisis behind the cause of that and all other wars was not political, diplomatic, or institutional. “The problem basically is theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence, an improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advances in science, art, literature, and all material and cultural developments of the past two thousand years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh,” he said.

As the world marks the 60th anniversary of the end of that horrible conflict and as the United States and allies wrestle anew with the ramifications of warfare, MacArthur’s observation still poses a haunting theological challenge. When turning to the West’s Christian heritage for insight, nothing is more commonly cited than the principles of the so-called Just War Theory. But how do the reflections of a 2,000-year-old religion on a dilemma that has plagued mankind from time immemorial apply to the 21st century?

Ask someone—a politician, a pundit, or an ordinary citizen—what makes a war just and typically the reply will point to the cause for the war and its indisputably good objective. Added, too, will often be the insistence that the war was forced upon us. In other words, as a rule we don’t like to go to war; we don’t believe in fabricating wars; and when we war we do so to achieve noble aims. But this much covers only one part of

the Just War Theory, the idea of *ius ad bellum*—that which gives a nation the right to take up arms. What are often overlooked and much harder to satisfy are the criteria that make the conduct of the war a just war, the idea of *ius in bello*. In the case of the Roman Catholic Church’s moral tradition, both elements are considered inseparable to evaluate whether a conflict is just. Therefore, one enters a war with the question of its final justice left open no matter how allowable the recourse to war may be in the first instance. This makes for an extremely complex moral picture—and quite deliberately so. The Just War Theory is not designed to provide an easy moral math quickly calculated but to be part of an intricate physics for the patient construction of peace.

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church* gives the following “strict conditions for legitimate defense by military force” that must be considered “at one and the same time”:

- The damage inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community of nations must be lasting, grave and certain;
- All other means of putting an end to it must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective;
- There must be serious prospects of success;
- The use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated. The power of modern means of destruction weighs very heavily in evaluating this condition.

Adding to this last point, related to the *ius in bello*, the church insists upon the respectful and humane treatment of noncombatants, wounded soldiers, and prisoners of war, and it condemns as crimes and mortal sins actions contrary to the laws of nations and universal principles, especially all manifestations of genocide. Finally, the Second Vatican Council is cited to condemn unequivocally as a crime against God and man all indiscriminate destruction of populated areas; the unique danger in this regard from modern atomic, biological, or chemical weapons is expressly linked to this rejection of wholesale carnage.

Quite obviously, these principles proceed from the assumption that one plays the defender’s role; armed aggression as a tool of statecraft is not an allowable option. It is also clear, however, that the principles related to the *ius ad bellum* do not allow for a quick march to war, either. Indeed, in some cases, these principles could require no military response to an attack, for example, when armed resistance amounts to a suicide gesture. A nation, no more than an individual, does not have the right to throw away its life in an act of pointless self-destruction. Even before considering the strictures of the *ius in bello* principles, it is obvious that the Just War Theory does not intend to make going to war a hasty moral decision. Quite the opposite, the theory hopes to make war as final a moral option as possible.

If this is so, why then did the Catholic tradition come to articulate these principles at all instead of embracing an



absolute pacifism? The repugnance of war is also placed alongside other principles in the church's moral tradition: the legitimate right to personal and societal self-defense even through the use of force; the seriousness of sins of omission which fail to hinder evil; and the possibility that the actions taken against a disruptor of rights and civic order can be made to serve toward something more than punishment but as a step toward the reconciliation and restoration of genuine peace between the parties. In short, it may be argued that the Just War Theory focuses more upon the peace desired than upon the conflict itself, by which a nation goes to war justly and conducts the fighting justly for the sake of peace. Absent such a perspective, the prospect for the avoidance of future wars becomes quite drear if not nearly hopeless. As Pope Benedict XV remarked so poignantly about the consequences of unjust resolutions to conflicts, "Remember that Nations do not die; humbled and oppressed, they chafe under the yoke imposed upon them, preparing a renewal of the combat, and passing down from generation to generation a mournful heritage of hatred and revenge."

Benedict XV was speaking in 1915 during World War I, the war that was supposed to end all wars but which actually set the stage for the catastrophe whose 60th anniversary of cessation we mark this year. As we find ourselves presently at war, the question remains, therefore, as to how well or justly our modern wars have measured up to the principles of the Just War Theory.

Surely the conditions laid out for the *ius ad bellum* were met when Britain and France decided to declare war on Nazi Germany: the devastation wrought by the invasion of Poland was staggering; no peaceful solution ever proved effective against Hitler's aggression; and the Western democracies had sufficient hopes to prevail in 1939. Add the

consideration that the prospect of a Nazi victory and domination of Europe held consequences for Western Civilization—if not all humanity—too horrific to contemplate, and the war came to obtain the dimension of moral necessity. The evils born of Hitler triumphant would have surpassed all imagining, as Nazi atrocities would later show. In the case of the United States, the same urgency applied when Japan and Germany brought the war to her. In addition, depredations by Japanese forces against local populations in conquered lands gave the Pacific war the character of a genuine act of liberation for those peoples.

That being said and, I believe, incontestable, the record of World War II is not so uniform when the principles of conduct in war, *ius in bello*, are considered. The sheer dehumanizing brutality of war is never confined to one side, especially if the conflict is long and costly of lives. Eventually, even those "in the right" can become tainted by the depravity that may have originally characterized the enemy, even to the level of incorporating that enemy's evil strategy and tactics. The Nazis appalled the world by their merciless bombardment of Warsaw, Rotterdam, Leningrad, Coventry, and London to name only a few martyred cities. How, then, are we to think of the Allies' adoption of the same strategy, done for the same objectives, against Dresden, Berlin, Tokyo, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the like? Given that war brutalizes and dehumanizes all sides and subjects soldiers and civilians alike to conditions and behavior they never thought possible and by which they will be affected throughout their lives, one must question whether any major conflict can ever completely qualify as a just war according to the full dimensions of the traditional teaching. Not even the heroic struggle against inhuman barbarism that was World War II evades that disturbing question.

It may seem, then, that the Just War Theory poses a challenge to human behavior that simply cannot be met. Perhaps. But this also demonstrates how the theory is nothing of a macabre moral math to allow war. Instead, the theory works strenuously if not to eliminate the reality of war itself then at least to minimize the depravity and perverting of the human conditions that result, both interiorly and exteriorly, in the spirit and in the flesh. Therefore, the theory does not belong primarily to the realms of statecraft, national interests, or politics, although it necessarily relates to these. Fundamentally, it seeks to address some of those theological and spiritual problems that lie at the roots of wars.

Considering this traditional Catholic teaching in conjunction with the somber anniversary of the atomic attacks calls to mind a dual image that powerfully captures the deeper theological dilemma. By way of a sacrilegious coincidence, Hiroshima was devastated on Aug. 6, the Catholic feast of the Lord's Transfiguration. The Gospels tell us that as Jesus radiated the glory of His divinity, a bright cloud overshadowed the apostles, from which the voice of God the Father declared, "This is My beloved Son on Whom My favor rests. Listen to Him." (Mt. 17:5)

One cloud on August 6, 1945 climbed to the heavens, consuming countless thousands and darkly overshadowing humanity with terror. Just War Theory as an expression of Catholic social teaching labors to ensure that human history and societies are never dominated by what the mushroom clouds over Japan represent but rather to make sure the bright cloud scatters the dark. I think General MacArthur would agree. ■

*Rev. Douglas J. Milewski is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Seton Hall University.*

# Visible Hand

America's high-tech edge will require as much investment to maintain as it did to build.

By Clyde Prestowitz

MOST AMERICANS are convinced that high technology is America's special preserve—the marvels of computers, memory chips, the Internet, miracle drugs, Mars exploration, and much between. Many believe that because of an innate pioneering spirit and a uniquely entrepreneurial system, it will always be the United States that produces that next new thing.

The whole notion of highly trained professionals chucking status and security to go for the gold with a chancy new company, of mere children or old geezers who have failed two or three times being given big money to try or try again, is definitely American. Companies like Intel, Apple, Microsoft, Cisco, Dell, and Google exemplify the protean nature of the system and the extraordinary value it has produced.

Yet all is not necessarily well in the U.S. high-tech establishment. The media focus on charismatic business leaders and hot new companies means that most people don't understand the real sources of technological leadership, particularly the entrepreneurial role of the U.S. government and the extent to which U.S. tech leadership is the result of government efforts. Nor do people understand that technological advance usually does not come from a flash of insight but is rather the fruit of an ecosystem. If you don't have a camcorder industry, you probably won't make digital cameras.

Do you know why Bill Gates is the world's richest man? I'll bet you think he had a fabulous idea for a new kind of software company that would get a virtual monopoly on the heart of the per-

sonal computer. Good guess, but wrong. Gates and most of the U.S. technology industries owe their leadership as much to U.S. victory in World War II, defense policy, and overall industrial primacy as to entrepreneurial virtuosity.

Preliminary development of computers took place during the war as part of the effort to break the German and Japanese codes and to calculate artillery firing sequences. The first modern computer was demonstrated on February 15, 1946, shortly after the war ended. It covered 1,800 square feet, and when it ran, the room temperature rose to 120 degrees.

After the war, there wasn't a lot of interest in monsters like this. Great Britain had the interest but not the money. In the United States, the smart guys at GE, RCA, and other major companies anticipated a commercial market, but it would take time to develop. IBM CEO Tom Watson said, "I think there is a world market for maybe five computers." The U.S. government was the only entity with both an interest and the resources to pursue computer development. They saw the potential and poured in the bucks.

IBM, then a maker of office and data-processing equipment, successfully bid to get a big share of the money. Through the 1950s and early 1960s, the U.S. government paid over half of IBM's R&D expenses. Based on this, IBM developed its revolutionary System 360 mainframe computer. Introduced in 1964, the 360 made the computer indispensable to corporate America. By the early 1980s, IBM controlled over 70 percent of the global computing market.

Then a small cloud appeared in the form of the Apple II personal computer. IBM initially dismissed the Apple II as a toy, but when it developed an enthusiastic following, word went out that something had to be done to put the upstart in its place—fast.

IBM had always produced its own components and software, thereby maintaining proprietary control over the sources of the technology. Now IBM's top executives wanted to get a personal computer into the market in a year and a half, so they opted for a skunk works operation detached from IBM that would use parts and software made by others and already on the market.

IBM's Management Committee convened in August 1980. Seated at the point of the V-shaped table, Chairman Frank Cary could survey an empire not unlike that of 19th-century Britain: the sun never set on IBM's offices sprawled around the globe. Decisions made at this table could rock governments and affect millions. But the decision made on this day would eventually rock IBM itself. Skunk works head Bill Lowe made the presentation and asked for a go-ahead on his program. He got it after only a little discussion.

Lowe had actually started in early July when one of his executives, Jack Sams, talked software with Bill Gates, a 24-year-old college dropout. When the discussion got to the operating system, Gates did not have one to sell but bought one from a Seattle programmer for \$75,000 and arranged to license it. IBM agreed to pay Microsoft \$80,000 and not to restrict Microsoft from licensing to

other firms. That anyone would be able to duplicate the IBM PC or that the arrangement would give Gates the power to control a new technology standard was unimaginable.

At first IBM seemed vindicated. By 1985, IBM had an 80 percent share in the personal-computer market. Apple had been put in its place. Or so it seemed. Compaq was the first clone in 1983 and was followed by hundreds of others. Bill Gates, who collected royalties on them all, was on his way to becoming the world's richest man as IBM's market share gradually fell to 10 percent.

The point is not how good a negotiator Gates was, or how myopic IBM was, although Gates was really good and IBM was really blind. The point is that the U.S. government created the world's dominant computer industry. If IBM had not moved boldly and shrewdly to seize leadership, another American company would have been the industry leader. There was never a chance that it would be a European or an Asian company.

The U.S. electronics, aerospace, and telephone industries are equally in the government's debt. RCA was created when Woodrow Wilson recognized the significance of radio communications at the Versailles Conference. He directed

invented the airplane, American aircraft manufacturers were lagging seriously behind their European competitors by 1915. To reverse this situation, Congress established the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics and gave it the mission of ensuring aeronautics leadership by developing and freely disseminating aerospace technology to U.S. industry. Boeing was launched in 1916 with a \$575,000 Navy contract for 50 trainer seaplanes, and it prospered for the next 40 years mainly on defense contracts for bombers. The Boeing 707 that gained fame as the first American commercial jet was just a version of the KC135 Air Force tanker.

Finally there is the example of AT&T and its Bell Laboratories. Early telephone was hampered by incompatible standards. To overcome this discrepancy, the government agreed to make AT&T a regulated monopoly on the condition that it provide universal service. As a result, Bell Labs became a unique national asset. For over 50 years, the labs regularly turned out new inventions and Nobel Prize winners.

After inventing the semiconductor along with John Bardeen and Walter Brattain, William Shockley returned from the labs to his native Palo Alto to establish

nological superiority. Domination had nothing to do with market forces and everything to do with targeted policy decisions. Additionally, America was the world's first mass market. U.S. manufacturers used government grants to expand their plants during the war in order to fulfill government materiel contracts. After the war, these essentially free plants turned to satisfying a continental market in which long pent-up demand was suddenly unleashed. A virtuous circle was created in which new technology led to new products that could be produced in America at far lower cost than anywhere else, even as American workers were paid more than anyone else.

Second, these industries and technologies were all tied up with manufacturing. Manufacturing in 1948 accounted for about 28 percent of GDP. It paid nearly 8 percent more than the general wage level. It was the source of enormous wealth and technological progress, and the great momentum of that time is still felt today. Yet early harbingers of changes to come were also present.

American technological supremacy bred a carelessness about its nurture along with overconfidence that led to missed opportunities. Japan recovered quickly from the war and developed a voracious appetite for new technologies. At the same time, the collaboration between U.S. industry and government began to give way to mutual suspicion and a new economic trend toward *laissez-faire*. Linkages between one industry and another and the role of manufacturing were increasingly de-emphasized. Finally, research and education expenditures began to be cut as spending on consumption increased.

In 1944, Alexander M. Poniatoff founded Ampex Corporation to make electric motors for the Navy. But demand collapsed at the war's end, and the company had to find something else to make. At about this time Masaru Ibuka, an engi-

## THE APPARENTLY **EFFORTLESS TECHNOLOGICAL SUPREMACY** AMERICANS ASSUME AS A BIRTHRIGHT IS SIGNIFICANTLY BASED ON **SPECIAL, TRANSIENT CIRCUMSTANCES**.

his assistant secretary of the Navy, Franklin D. Roosevelt, to use Navy funds, contracts, and influence to create a new corporation to achieve American leadership in radio. Subsequently RCA not only took leadership in radio but pioneered television and founded the global consumer-electronics industry.

The U.S. aerospace industry likewise owes its dominance to a generous government. Although the Wright brothers

Shockley Semiconductor Laboratories. Most of the American semiconductor industry traces its lineage to this lab.

My point is twofold. First, the apparently effortless technological supremacy Americans assume as a birthright is significantly based on special, transient circumstances. The two World Wars and the Cold War stimulated a massive and, for Americans, unnatural collaboration between government and industry to develop tech-

neer who had spent the war making electrical parts for the Japanese navy, and his friend Akio Morita had just formed Tokyo Telecommunications Engineering Corporation (later known as Sony). They too were looking for something to make.

What both companies were looking for was actually in Germany. During the war, U.S. soldiers were astonished to hear the Munich Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra playing at 3:00 AM. What were these people doing giving concerts at that hour? They weren't. To make people think Hitler was speaking at one place when he was actually elsewhere, the Germans had developed the magnetophon, a magnetic tape recorder that could duplicate sound and retain it far better than any other device of the time. Once the war was over, officer Jack Mullin recovered a couple from a German radio station and brought them to San Francisco. Poniatoff knew immediately that he had found what he was seeking. It was powered by three electric motors similar to those Ampex was already producing.

He worked out a deal with Mullin, and the two cloned the German machine. After experts from General Electric and Stanford Research Institute advised that the device had no future, the two showed it to Bing Crosby. He loved it. Because the sound quality was so good, he could record his shows instead of doing them live and could spend more time on the golf course. With Bing's backing, the recorder and Ampex took off. The product line was quickly extended to include precision recorders for a variety of military, scientific, and industrial applications.

Meanwhile, in Tokyo, Ibuka was inspired to develop a clone. The Japanese market was then protected by high tariffs and restrictions on investment by foreigners. Ampex could not produce or sell there, and Sony's new recorder quickly dominated the Japanese market. Then, on one of his trips to the United

States, Ibuka made another discovery—the transistor, which had just been invented at AT&T's Bell Labs. With this device AT&T could have controlled the future of the entire electronics industry. But as a regulated monopoly under U.S. law it was required to license the technology to all comers, foreign or domestic. Ibuka bought a license for \$25,000. While American competitors slept, Sony introduced the first transistor radio in 1955. It immediately became a huge hit, especially in the open American market, where competitors were self-satisfied, tariffs low, and customers willing.

## **BARRIERS BADLY HURT U.S. COMPANIES BY PREVENTING THEM FROM EXPLOITING THEIR ADVANTAGES IN THE JAPANESE MARKET.**

Television, pioneered by RCA, became the big new thing in the 1950s, but time-delay broadcasts were expensive, complicated, and unreliable. RCA chairman David Sarnoff put up \$50 million and called on his engineers to develop within five years a video recorder. Poniatoff also sensed the potential of video recording and gave his engineers \$15,000 to try to beat RCA. It worked. When the convention of the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters met in 1956, it was the upstart Ampex rather than the giant RCA that stunned the audience with a perfect video playback. Ampex had exclusive ownership of the key patent rights and, at this moment, controlled the destiny of video recording.

Sony, meanwhile, was not asleep. As part of a consortium organized and funded by the Japanese government, it was able to produce a near copy within a few months. Although other Japanese companies soon followed, all faced the problem of infringing the Ampex patents. Ampex, however, faced problems of its own. Not only did it need transistor technology to enable further miniaturization,

but it also was barred by Japanese government policy from entering the growing Japanese market without a partner.

No one in the U.S. government saw any strategic value in a video recorder, but the Japanese did. On top of that, the United States viewed Japan's trade barriers as hurting only Japan by preventing Japanese consumers from buying superior U.S. products. But the barriers also badly hurt U.S. companies by preventing them from exploiting their advantages in the Japanese market and by forcing them to transfer their technology in order to gain market entrance. A Sony-Ampex joint

venture was concluded in 1958. Sony got this deal not because Ampex wanted it, but because it was the only way for Ampex to get into the Japanese market.

After a financial hiccup, Ampex named Bill Roberts as its new CEO. He unilaterally canceled the deal in 1960 because of suspicion that Sony was misappropriating Ampex intellectual property. Sony sued for breach of contract and won a fully paid-up license for the Ampex technology. The race was on.

None of this dampened Wall Street's enthusiasm for Ampex. It joined a select group of favored technology stocks, and there was great pressure on Ampex to match them in growth and profitability. Unsure of his company's ability to keep up with the rest of the glamour fraternity simply by growing its core business, Roberts went on an acquisition binge. Meanwhile, Sony and the other Japanese makers were sticking to their knitting. By the late 1960s, Sony was the leader in Japan and had made significant inroads in the U.S. market.

To fight back, Roberts presented an "Instavideo" prototype to the board in



early 1969. The new recorder was unveiled before 300 reporters at the Americana Hotel in New York on September 6, 1970. It was a smash hit. Heroic Ampex seemed once again to have used its entrepreneurial and technological virtuosity to throw a Hail Mary and beat the big guys in the last minute of play. Ampex's stock price jumped 50 percent in two days.

Then it all fell apart. Instavideo should have been manufactured in Chicago close to the R&D team, but Toshiba was willing to fund a new plant if the product was produced in a joint venture in Japan. Turning down a plan to produce it jointly with Motorola or Magnavox, Roberts said he didn't need any more U.S. competitors and opted for the Toshiba deal.

Three years later, Sony launched Beta-max as the first commercial consumer VCR, and in 1976 JVC launched its VCR. Over the next 15 years, the VCR became the biggest consumer product ever. While Ampex struggled to survive on royalties from the licensing of its old patents, Sony became a \$50-billion company with dominant positions that made it a formidable challenger even to the most powerful American technology companies. The VCR became a Japanese monopoly, and the United States was out of the business altogether.

Ampex was not the first U.S. company to fall victim to inappropriate U.S. trade policies and its own poor management. By 1972, the textile and steel industries were failing to compete with the Japanese and losing market share. RCA and the rest of the U.S. television industry had given up on black-and-white television, and within four years the Japanese had 50 percent of the color market, on their way to 100 percent. Radio production had long since moved to Japan, and stereo sets would soon follow.

The 1980s saw continuous trade conflict between Japan and the United States as Western manufacturers fought to survive the flood of high-quality, low-cost

### **The U.S. government has been co-operating with the Libyan intelligence service on the issue of terrorism and al-Qaeda.**

Last month the notorious Libyan intelligence chief Musa Kusa and a group of associates flew from Tripoli to Guantanamo Bay to meet with Libyan prisoners captured in Afghanistan. Most of the "enemy combatants" are expected to be "rendered" to Libyan custody soon for more intensive interrogation. The U.S. has also agreed to provide counterterrorism training to Libyan intelligence officers. The collaboration, approved at the White House level, will almost certainly be controversial if surviving family members of Libyan terrorism victims find out. Musa Kusa was the organizer behind the Libyan downing of Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988 that led to the deaths of all 259 persons on board and 11 people on the ground. The training agreement is a *quid pro quo* to reward the Libyans for their help in closing down Pakistan's A.Q. Khan nuclear trafficking network.



### **A Homeland Security Customs Enforcement Department top-secret audit of contracting in Iraq is beginning to reveal a level of corruption and fraud that is crippling both reconstruction and self-defense efforts.**

Water and electricity supplies are at lower levels than one year ago, while the lines at gas stations have become longer. A weapons procurement of more than \$5 billion for the Ministries of Defense and Interior under interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi has reportedly completely disappeared, while a \$300 million purchase of 24 military helicopters from Poland bought obsolete aircraft, many of which had already been stripped for parts. Work has never started on hundreds of millions of dollars in infrastructure-improvement contracts given to ministry cronies. Several deputy ministers who balked at signing multimillion-dollar fictitious contracts have been fired and replaced by more amenable appointees. Meanwhile, the disproportionate number of Kurds in the Defense Ministry is diverting funds and equipment to *pesh-merga* militia units preparing to seize Kirkuk. On the other side of the Green Zone, the Interior Ministry's police commandos provide cover for anti-Sunni hit teams from the Iranian-supported Badr Brigade and from rogue Shi'ite radical Moqtada al-Sadr's Mehdi Army. The Potemkin-village Baghdad government is increasingly irrelevant to the future of Iraq.



### **The Department of State is becoming Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's Dreamworks on the Potomac,**

with oversized offices stuffed with high-paid bureaucrats churning out lots of images and celluloid action but little of substance. The highly touted Public Diplomacy office has yet to begin operations, with Karen Hughes apparently preferring to spend her time in Texas. A major reorganization is shifting resources to deal with rogue regimes, transnational terrorist groups, and weapons proliferators. A new Bureau for International Security and Nonproliferation will be formed and will include an office focused exclusively on efforts by terrorist groups to obtain weapons of mass destruction. How it will co-ordinate with the FBI, CIA, and Homeland Security, all of which are already doing the same thing, is unclear. A second new bureaucracy promoting democracy around the world will include a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Democracy.

*Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a partner in Cannistraro Associates.*

exports. The Big Three automakers closed one factory after another. Although the steel industry had a “trigger price” arrangement that put a floor under U.S. steel prices, the U.S. industry continued to lose market share.

Then the air went out of the Japanese bubble. Companies for which capital had essentially been free suddenly found themselves burdened with bad debt as the banking system ground to a virtual halt. The Japanese economy went from high growth in the 1980s to no growth in the 1990s, and many in America and Europe began to wonder why they had ever feared the Japanese. This sense of superiority turned to euphoria as dot-com mania spread. Then there was biotech, which U.S. industry dominated absolutely, since the U.S. government through the National Institutes of Health (NIH) spent more than the rest of the world combined. There was also an apparent resurgence of high-tech manufacturing. The Internet was hot, and everyone wanted the high-speed capacity provided by optical-fiber communication links.

Like the Japanese bubble before it, the U.S. bubble of the late '90s had to burst. To survive in the post-bubble environment, the contract manufacturers closed plants and decamped to Asia, Mexico, and Hungary in search of lower costs. Detroit's auto producers continued losing market share. The steel industry was an even sorrier story. All the integrated steel makers except U.S. Steel went belly up. Other industries simply disappeared. No one thinks much about machine tools and they don't make hot Christmas gifts. But they are the foundation of all other industries; you can't make anything without them. Yet the U.S. machine tool industry has become a shadow of its former self. At the same time, things like ball bearings and forgings, which are in nearly anything that moves, have almost ceased being made in the United States.

Through all the trade deficits, there was always one bright spot in the U.S. export statistics—aircraft. Boeing was almost always America's biggest exporter. But in 2003, Boeing orders dipped below those of the European Airbus and have stayed there. Recently Boeing announced plans to develop a new generation 787 Dreamliner. In an effort to match the EU subsidy of Airbus development costs, Boeing turned to Japan, where it partnered with Japanese aircraft-parts makers. Over 50 percent of the 777 was developed and produced in Japan.

As more and more U.S. manufacturers struggled to stay in business, there were more and more things no longer made in America. Flat-panel displays, though invented in the United States, had followed the television, VCR, and laptop computer to Asia. For many years, as the deficit in manufactured goods rose, economists told us not to worry: America still had a surplus in high-tech products. Today the U.S. high-tech trade deficit is over \$30 billion and climbing, powered by a high-tech deficit with China that has gone from nothing in 1998 to \$21 billion in 2003. This deterioration of trade occurred as overall manufacturing declined as a percentage of GDP to the point that the United States now barely leads Japan in total manufacturing output, despite being more than twice as large in both population and GDP.

Economic thinking in America has changed dramatically from the early days of the 20th century, when President Wilson could just order up an RCA. Of U.S. spending, industry R&D accounts for about 66 percent and government the rest. These ratios are the reverse of the 1960s. The physical sciences have been cut by 37 percent since 1970; total U.S. government spending on physical science is less than the \$5 billion Intel spends annually. The result is declining U.S. performance. Last year the only American company among the top 10

U.S. patent recipients was IBM. All the rest were foreign firms. Similarly, EU scientists have topped Americans in the numbers of articles published and cited over the past several years. Until the late 1990s, U.S. publications outnumbered the rest of the world combined.

While America still has the best cards, it will have to hold on to them—and learn to play them a lot better. Maintaining a unipolar, hegemonic leadership is out of the question. But there is much America can do to mitigate the impact of wage competition, maintain the promise of opportunity at the heart of the American Dream, provide for a continually rising standard of living more equally distributed, and continue to influence the course of global affairs.

America needs to understand that its refusal to have a broad competitiveness policy is, in fact, a policy. And it gives leading U.S. CEOs no choice but to play into the strategies of other countries. This policy, according to its proponents, leaves decisions to the unseen hand of the market. Actually it leaves them to the highly visible hands of lobbyists and foreign policymakers. It is a policy that ultimately leads to impoverishment.

The grand old industrial labs like Bell Labs have been turned into mere husks. It has been 20 years since anyone at Bell Labs received a Nobel Prize. In times past, this was an annual event. If you want to see the future, you won't find it at Bell Labs anymore. You'll have to take a long plane ride to Asia or cross the Atlantic to the European Union. ■

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*Clyde Prestowitz was a counselor to the secretary of commerce in the Reagan administration. From the book Three Billion New Capitalists: The Great Shift of Wealth and Power to the East. Copyright © 2005. Reprinted by arrangement with BasicBooks, a member of the Perseus Books Group. All rights reserved.*

# Bush's Iran Blind Spot

President Bush is down at his Crawford ranch, still “cautiously optimistic” about Iraq and Iran. His approval ratings plummet even as temperatures inch up. The

world should leave us alone in August.

But that's never the way it happens. The first Gulf War started in August 1990 in 125-degree weather, when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. The big decision for us to invade Iraq came that hot American August of 2002, when Colin Powell dramatically went to the United Nations for support. So it goes in this dreary white heat of the end of summer.

And now, with the new Iranian president's decision to restart a uranium conversion facility, there is a strange stirring in Washington. Rumors abound: “Cheney is in one of his hyper moods in Bush's absence and has missiles fixed and ready to strike at Iran's facilities.”

To put it simply, the “Iran crisis” of August 2005 is really about how, with American power mired in the quicksand of Iraq, Iran has been moving to become an aggressive, and perhaps the major, power in the Middle East. The unspeakable ignorance of this administration about the history and culture of the region has finally caught up.

First, the surface story: the new president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, made it clear again that Iran wants to generate electricity through nuclear power, which is legal under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. But the United States, along with most of the European states, fears that Iran is really after nuclear weapons and has so deceived inspectors for years about its activities that it has forfeited its right to the innocent electricity program.

Then the dangerous subtext: while America has been so dangerously and

wastefully tied down in Iraq, Iran has been moving to form the diplomatic, political, and military imprint of a kind of “Shi'ite Internationale” among the region's Shia populations. This would take in all the followers of the Shia sect of Islam, from 60 percent of Iraq to the oil-rich eastern regions of Saudi Arabia to the Iranian-backed Hezbollah guerrilla/political control of Lebanon.

Two of our most sagacious analysts of the area, Larry Johnson and Patrick Lang, both with years of experience, sent out an e-mail to their colleagues this week outlining the situation: “Iran, if things continue to go its way, finds itself on the threshold of controlling vast oil resources that stretch from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean ... Iran is well on its way to achieving de facto control of significant portions of Iraq. Teheran is backing Shia cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani (a Persian, not an Arab) and the radical Muqtada al-Sadr. The Iranians are funneling money and training to supporters inside Iraq. The Iraqi Shia control the political process and comprise the majority of the security forces ... Iran is in a dominant position in Lebanon. The murder earlier this year of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri has left Lebanon under the de facto military guard of Hezbollah. Iran remains the main benefactor, supporter and adviser to Hezbollah ...”

The odd thing is that Iran, not Iraq, was always the primary target of the neocon group that so distorted American policy after 9/11, in part because Iran was seen as the primary enemy of Israel;

but Iraq seemed easier to them. Thus, the Iranians were able to simply stand back while their archenemy, Saddam, fell at no cost to themselves. Should it be any surprise that they should move, as ruthlessly as always, to achieve their goals? And now, with their exalted idea of themselves as the holiest of Shia, their goals have been perfectly complemented by the “Great Satan.” (That's us.)

Iran is no unified state. There are special ministries that, often secretly, back revolutionary movements like Hezbollah; there are special military units, such as the Revolutionary Guards, the “Quds” (Jerusalem) forces and other militias. The new president is himself a kind of mystery; but we do know that he, too, represents a turn away from the liberalizing that was slowly progressing in Iran—surely another reaction to the American occupation next door.

Michael Mazarr, professor at the U.S. National War College, wrote in *The New Republic*, “the only long-term solution to the problem of Iranian nuclear aspirations is integration into the world economy and a gradual return to reform.” But the American overextension into the Middle East has made this, at least for now, impossible.

The administration was warned by many of these analysts before 2003 of every one of these historic alignments in the Middle East and of every rather obvious danger. The administration very deliberately chose not to see them then, and there is little evidence that it sees them now. ■

*From the column: “Iran Took Advantage of Time in the Shadows to Build Power” © 2005 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.*

# Arts & Letters

## FILM

[ 2046 ]

### Evelyn Wong at the Hotel Hong Kong

By Steve Sailer

HONG KONG might be the most materialistic city in the world, but its wealth has made feasible the expensive obsessions of one of the movie business's true aesthetes, Wong Kar Wai. His film "2046," a tone poem about erotic nostalgia, has finally debuted in America more than six years after he began filming with an all-star cast of China's most glamorous leading ladies.

The making of "2046"—Wong's lavish quasi-sequel to his oblique and exquisite little ode to unrequited ardor, "In the Mood for Love"—could be called the Asian "Eyes Wide Shut" if Stanley Kubrick's laborious production had employed not just Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman but also Julia Roberts, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Angelina Jolie, and Mariah Carey.

Fortunately, after infinite tribulations, Wong and his long-suffering colleagues, most notably the great Australian cinematographer Christopher Doyle (the lensman for last year's grand "Hero"), have emerged with a triumph, although a languorous and self-indulgent one. "2046" can induce the kind of reverie, the art buzz, that few films even attempt these days, but make sure you see it in a theatre with comfy seats.

"2046" stars five famous Chinese actresses, with Zhang Ziyi making the most indelible impact as a sultry taxi dancer who falls hopelessly in love with the caddish hero. Zhang has been seen mostly in kung fu movies like "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," but in "2046" she seems quite happy not having to kick anybody. Instead, she, like all the women in the film, wears extremely tight 1960s dresses and even tighter high heels. (Wong's foot fetish would be comic if it weren't so lyrically visualized.)

In recent years, Hollywood's he-man directors have largely lost interest in making actresses look ravishing, but Chinese filmmakers still idolize old-fashioned silver-screen goddesses. Indeed, Wong and Doyle dreamed up a clever gimmick for portraying their lovelorn ladies being wracked by sorrow. The actresses hold as still as possible for several minutes while being filmed in fast motion, so their random tiny movements make them appear to be quivering with partially repressed emotion.

Just as Evelyn Waugh's perennial characters, such as the fop Alastair Digby-Vane Trumpington, kept reappearing in novels of radically varying emotional pitch, Wong has repeatedly revived his old characters as a sort of tribute to his own genius. Fortunately, to avoid baffling viewers who haven't seen all his films, Wong makes "2046" repetitious enough that comprehension eventually sinks in.

In "2046," Tony Leung (best known in the U.S. as the noble assassin in "Hero") once again plays Mr. Chow, who was the diffident and depressed cuckolded husband in the early 1960s period piece "In the Mood for Love." Yet Wong's fans may be puzzled that Mr. Chow's heartbreak has now somehow afforded him a per-

sonality infusion, turning him into a lothario of devastating charm.

Newcomers will appreciate the hero's newfound charisma, however. Leung's Mr. Chow has become a film noir protagonist worthy of Hollywood's golden age, a brilliant rake with a Clark Gable mustache and some snappy lines for the ladies. Yet, though he seems to embody the sexual self-satisfaction of Frank Sinatra singing "When I Was Seventeen," there's a deep undercurrent of sadness.

Mr. Chow is now a hack newspaper columnist who prostitutes his talents churning out thousands of words daily to pay the rent on his residential hotel room, #2047. Next door in #2046, a series of young women move in and out of his life, and Mr. Chow writes them into his pulp science-fiction novel *2046* as beautiful androids. Then he falls for the hotel manager's daughter, played by the adorable Chinese singer Faye Wong, who resembles Audrey Tautou of "Amélie." But her heart belongs to a Japanese man her father finally lets her marry, and Mr. Chow is bereft again.

So he pens a sad sequel called *2047* about a future where nothing ever changes, which people visit to recapture lost memories, where a man develops a passion for a gorgeous but deteriorating robot who can no longer respond in time.

Although Wong's delightful 1994 comedy "Chungking Express" was a tribute to pop culture, his wistful focus has turned increasingly toward the vanished Hong Kong of the 1960s, where his family lived in a Mandarin-language cocoon trying to keep alive Shanghai's 1949 culture. "2046" is perhaps most reminiscent of another exile's science-fiction novel about a future that evoked his longed-for past, Vladimir Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading*.

Nabokov would have liked "2046." ■

Rated R for lots of sex.



## BOOKS

[*Equality, Decadence, and Modernity: The Collected Essays of Stephen J. Tonsor*, Gregory L. Schneider, ed., ISI Books, 343 pages]

# The Art of History

By John Lukacs

"HISTORY," Macaulay once wrote, "begins in novel and ends in essay." This is a terse aphorism. What does it mean? The historian, like the novelist, tells a story, a story from some portion of the past; they describe, not define. The novelist has it easier: he can invent people who did not exist and events that did not happen (though he, too, not unlike the historian, is bound to the framework and the background of a particular time and place, in order to render his story plausible). The historian cannot describe people and things that did not exist; he must limit himself to men and women who really lived; he must depend on evidences of their acts and words (though, like the novelist, he must surmise something of their minds; not only their actualities but their potentialities; not only what they said or did but how and why). In one word, he must "essay"—a word that is close to "assay" but is more than that—not only weigh the evidence but attempt to find its meaning. Not every historian is capable, or willing, to do that. Even fewer are those who understand that some kind of moral meaning is inherent in every human event and in every human expression. Still fewer are those historians whose vision of history is by and large in accord with their vision of their own task, which is to promote historical understanding together with or even more than historical certainty. Such historians are teachers as well as writers: they teach when they write.

Such a man is Prof. Stephen Tonsor. He wrote more essays than books. But the present volume is more than a collection in the ordinary sense of that word, of this and that piece of writing. These essays must be read together: they are a "co-llection." In the academic circles of professional historians Tonsor is hardly known, perhaps even not at all. This is regrettable, but perhaps right too, because of the nearly inevitable false and corrupting conditions of recognition, publicity, success in the world in which we now live. What is also inevitable is that an understanding of history must be conservative in the widest and deepest sense of this nowadays much corrupted and abused word.

Tonsor's knowledge of history is exceptionally wide, and his understanding of history is exceptionally profound. In science, the rules are always important; in history, often the exceptions. Perhaps this is applicable to scientists and to historians too. History is philosophy teaching by example, said Bolingbroke nearly 300 years and Dionysius of Halicarnassus more than 2,000 years ago: Tonsor is a philosopher because he is a historian, not the reverse. *Sui generis*, but not eccentric: German by origin, Catholic by religion, conservative

pages, a condition that is illustrative of the terse and succinct quality of their author's writing. "Decadence" struggles with the superficially easy but really difficult question of what decadence is, rather than what its many signs suggest. Tonsor, who has read Tocqueville much and very well, deals with the problematic conflict of Equality and Liberty historically and philosophically; here his essays are enriched by his knowledge and respect for the New Testament. Two of the eight parts of this collection, including nine chapters of published and unpublished essays, are observations of how contemporary ideologies and practices adopted by so many representatives of the historical profession have misled and corrupted the proper practice of historiography. That historical thinking and that historical consciousness are necessarily conservative rather than radical should go without saying but, alas, this is seldom the case and in this respect Stephen Tonsor, whether consciously or not, is in accord with Samuel Johnson's profound recognition that we instruct by reminding people of things they know—or at least ought to know. A few of his sentences rise to the level of wise aphorisms. "Liberty and obligation are indissolubly

**TONSOR IS IN ACCORD WITH SAMUEL JOHNSON'S PROFOUND RECOGNITION THAT WE INSTRUCT BY REMINDING PEOPLE OF THINGS THEY KNOW.**

in his political convictions. He stands on the shoulders of giants. He knows well, and profoundly understands, the works of the great men who formed our historical comprehension—Burke, Tocqueville, Newman, Acton, Burckhardt. The latter (also largely ignored by the professional academics during his lifetime) told his students, and the world, that history has no specific or scientific method of its own. "*Bisogna saper leggere*," he said in Italian, "one must know how to read." Stephen Tonsor's entire historianship is proof of that.

This collection has eight parts and 29 essays. Few of these are longer than 10

linked. To be free to do anything means to be obligated to do something." This is worthy of Ortega (whom Tonsor evidently read, and whom here and there he cites). "'Historical necessity' is always another name for the abdication of moral responsibility"—an implicit refutation of Victor Hugo's hoary cliché about Ideas Whose Time Has Come.

It is thus that this book is worth not only reading but reading and rereading. Gregory L. Schneider's introduction is both modest and excellent. I have one quibble with Schneider's collection, which is that it includes a tad too much of Tonsor's relatively recent political

writings. In "Why I Am a Republican and a Conservative," Tonsor wrote, "We have, as Republicans, always believed that we must convince the outside world of the blessing of the American system by our example rather than by the force of arms... We, as Republicans... must be prepared to fight, but only when our national interest is involved... I have not always been a Republican, though I think it unlikely that I shall ever cease now to be one. ... I am a Republican in politics because I believe in nonintervention in foreign affairs..." "We must not become the policeman of the world. Our interest in the Third World must be predicated on the idea of benign neglect." These first sentences are taken from Tonsor's unpublished papers, the last two from a publication less than five years ago. Allow me to wonder: what does Stephen Tonsor, Republican and conservative, think now? ■

*John Lukacs is the author of Remem-bered Past: John Lukacs on History, His-torians, and Historical Knowledge.*

## MOVING?

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[*Christina, Queen of Sweden: The Restless Life of a European Eccentric*, Veronica Buckley, Fourth Estate, 384 pages]

## The Cat-and-Mouse Queen

By R.J. Stove

SOME NATIONS FORGET NOTHING; others forget everything. Squarely in the first group is France, whose entire political life for two centuries has been a series of footnotes to the Revolution, and where even such unanticipated modern horrors as a huge Islamic immigrant underclass are still defended by pious governmental bluster about the Declaration of the Rights of Man. Squarely in the second group is Sweden, whose pre-modern self is at such variance with its modern self that it seems to inhabit not merely a different age but a different planet. When one contemplates Sweden's public image of today—a lukewarm welfarist despotism tempered by assassination, a land at once Erastian and atheistic, a society passionless even in its sexual manias—it requires a heroic paradigm shift to envisage Sweden as (a) a swashbuckling military power, (b) feared by every other regime in Europe, and (c) so inflamed by theological disputes as to resemble some latter-day Protestant version of Byzantium. Yet such Sweden was.

At no time did Swedes inspire more fear, hatred, and respect than in the 17th century. And no Swedish monarch ever inspired more amazement, distrust, and devotion than Christina, who succeeded to the Swedish throne in 1632 at the age of six; who abandoned that throne in 1654; and who died 35 years afterwards, as object lesson as any King Lear in the dangers of combining power mania with self-abasement mania.

Christina's father, Gustavus Adolphus—"the Lion of the North"—fell in that most Pyrrhic among victories, the battle of Lützen, which left the Swedish

army triumphant but its leader a corpse, slain, some said, by his own troops. To the particular sufferings of life in the paternal shadow of a military genius, Christina added the more generalized miseries of the deformed. "As a baby she had apparently been dropped," Veronica Buckley tells us, "and her injuries had left her noticeably lopsided in the upper body, with one shoulder higher than the other; the portraits show her in tactful semi-profile." Unable to ingratiate by her appearance, Christina sought to overawe by her learning and emerged from her curriculum's severity with what could well have been the best classical education any of her compatriots had yet attained. Her intellect never failed her, though her common sense often did.

All her life Christina derived a kind of gymnastic pleasure from pretending—to herself as to others—that two and two could equal anything from three to 428, that the straight should be crooked, that the plain places should be rough, and that the shortest distance between two points was a spiral. Such a mind as hers will almost always succeed in local politics, however much it fails on a wider stage. So in Christina's case. Sweden's redoubtable prime minister, Axel Oxenstierna, had enjoyed almost absolute status as Gustavus Adolphus's confidant; the young queen cut Oxenstierna down to the size of a mere *primus inter pares*, while retaining a certain fondness for him. For years she kept her cousin and chief suitor, Karl Gustavus, dangling with a "will I, won't I" campaign of meticulous indirection, which managed both to guarantee his interest in marrying her and to render any such marriage impossible.

Buckley maintains that "Christina's hesitancy was not the result of callousness ... not a cat-and-mouse game," but one would like further data to substantiate this character reference since cat-and-mouse games exercised so overwhelming an allure over her at every other stage of her career. In any event, Karl Gustavus could not have held her attention, let alone her love, for long. Universally esteemed as a military

strategist, he remained—by Christina's exacting standards, anyhow—rather a bore, entirely unable to share his sovereign's metaphysical and artistic obsessions. He would never have forced Descartes to visit Stockholm in the middle of a pitiless Swedish winter, as Christina famously did, killing off the great philosopher in the process.

Rumors of the queen's religious deviations within a Lutheran stronghold continued to pullulate. Scarcely had she begun to reign as an adult than she flirted with the idea of abdication. Plans to wed her to the Elector of Brandenburg's son—and by this means to gain for Sweden mastery of the Baltic Sea—had run aground, thanks mostly to her determined piloting. Swedish law made Catholicism a criminal offense punishable by imprisonment and sometimes by the scaffold. Forbidden fruit invariably thrilled Christina's nerves. Undergoing Catholic instruction in secret, from foreign Jesuits, became addictive to one as naturally conspiratorial as the queen. Meanwhile, although Descartes might be dead, she still surrounded herself with other Frenchmen, who unlike Descartes prided themselves on their open impiety. Even as she slyly wooed Jesuit interlocutors to her court, her agents pursued for her much subversive literature. This included a notoriously blasphemous book called *The Three Impostors*, which Emperor Frederick II was accused of having written in the early 13th century (the "impostors" concerned being Moses, Christ, and Muhammad), and which Christina never succeeded in tracking down. Catholicism's pyramidal governance made, for her, a welcome contrast with Protestant states, where an impudent gentry seemed always able to grab power. She found Charles I's decapitation especially shocking, though later she received with every sign of enthusiasm Cromwell's ambassador, Bulstrode Whitelocke. Yet Buckley demonstrates that Catholicism's chief merit, for Christina, lay in its appeal to her aesthetic sense. Mediterranean culture captivated her as Scandinavian Lutheranism never could. "O for

a beaker full of the warm South" sums up the queen's attitude.

By 1654, even her formidable powers of domestic pretense had worn thin. At a solemn ceremony that year in Uppsala's castle, Christina divested herself of office—only with considerable delay could two noblemen be persuaded to take the crown from her head—and named Karl Gustavus as her successor. During her restless self-imposed exile, Christina wore (to quote Buckley again) "flat men's shoes, often boots, and frequently a sword ... [h]er speech would grow coarser and her habits rougher." Even in her homeland she had scorned feminine caution, riding maniacally on horseback. Now, with her mannish attire, uncouth postures, and increasing taste for the most ferocious swearing—delivered in a gruff, vehement baritone—she looked and sounded like a freak. Gossip charged her with lesbianism, even with hermaphroditism; the likeliest guess is that physical relations, particularly with males, repelled her. "I could never bear," she once complained, "to be used by a man the way a peasant uses his fields." Certainly she displayed, like many another asexual before and since, untiring zest for dirty talk. Such talk helped to perpetuate her skill as a publicity genius: a singular achievement for anyone in the age of Louis XIV.

Her new faith's highest officials puzzled over what to do with her. Soon after she formally embraced Catholicism (in Brussels) she "spoke laughingly of the Catholic belief in transubstantiation," thereby inspiring fears that she had intended her conversion as an elaborate prank. Intermittent pontifical rebukes failed to impress someone who appears to have considered her own rightful role in the hierarchy as being that of Pope Christina I. In her long—and probably platonic—relationship with the ambitious young cardinal Decio Azzolino, she indubitably fancied herself as pope-maker. Simultaneously, she harbored a fierce ambition to dominate secular politics, or at least a substantial corner thereof.

Within three years of quitting Sweden, she aimed to rule Spanish-controlled

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Naples. Cardinal Mazarin originally gave her to understand that France would support her aim. He scuttled away from this vague assurance once Gian-Rinaldo Monaldeschi, a quick-witted and mischief-making favorite of Christina's, revealed to Spain's government details of her plans. Christina obtained revenge by having Monaldeschi murdered, with many a refinement of torture, in the château where she was Louis XIV's guest. Louis would probably have been content to see Christina arrange a dozen killings, provided she did not frighten the horses; but carrying out a private execution on France's royal property transcended permissible behavior, and Christina's Neapolitan dreams abruptly ended.

Subsequently she looked east. In 1667 some hoped, and others feared, that the Polish king Jan Kazimierz would marry her; the subservient role of queen-consort she rejected with scorn, thereby having once again—in Buckley's brisk phrase—"allowed her pride to obstruct her better interest." When Jan Kazimierz resigned his office a year later, Poland suddenly struck her as wildly attractive. She had long-standing family connections to the place; she shared its people's religion; various Vatican bureaucrats favored her installation in Warsaw, if only to get her out of their hair. Nevertheless her schemes for the Polish throne also came to nothing. Ultimately she could not bear to part from Azzolino for good: besides which, Poland's magnates wanted a man in the top job, and for this desire they regarded even the baritone Christina as an inadequate substitute.

So Christina stayed mostly in Rome thereafter, cultivating eminent sculptors and composers (Bernini, Arcangelo Corelli, and Alessandro Scarlatti, *inter alia*), adding to her formidable collection of primarily Italian paintings, and at last more or less tolerating her political impotence. Always prone to the wiles of dexterous but worthless men, as the Monaldeschi affair had confirmed, she fell in her late middle age for a real shocker: Miguel de Molinos, the Spanish

priest who founded Quietism. Molinos insisted that his brand of contemplation rendered conventional Catholic penances redundant, and furthermore, that if one's soul attained the desired state of total passivity before God, one could sin unpunished, since the sin would occur without one's own consent. Eventually the papal Inquisition clapped Molinos into jail, but Christina still defended his aberrations. Any teaching that removed a human intermediary between herself and God was, in her eyes, commendable. She expired in 1689 after one last prodigious outburst of queenly wrath, and she rests in St. Peter's Basilica.

A strange narrative altogether, told with flawless grace by Buckley, whose literary debut this is, and who should be urged to write many more biographies. Christina's tale compels study both for its insights into Europe's post-Renaissance intrigue and for the luridly spotlighted figure of its heroine. Whereas Oxenstierna emerges as an archetypal 17th-century statesman—a recognizable contemporary of Cromwell and Richelieu—Christina has more in common with our own *Zeitgeist* than with hers. Single-handedly, without even fully discerning what she wrought, she invented that quintessential manifestation of ideological modernism: the cafeteria Catholic, an intellectual camp-follower, ignoring all dogmas arduous enough to ensure fashionable disapproval; reducing religious doctrine to ethical platitudes; openly derisive of papal claims upon the believer's conscience; yet marked by a certain literary flair, genuinely in love with Catholic real estate, and apt to rage at even the mildest accusation of heterodox thought. Except for her utterly conventional acceptance of the "divinity [that] doth hedge a king," and her consequent lack of interest in exporting Whigish democracy abroad, a reincarnated Christina would find her soulmate in Michael Novak. On this ground alone, she deserves American readers' attention. ■

*R.J. Stove lives in Melbourne, Australia.*

[*The Letters of Robert Lowell*, Saskia Hamilton, ed., Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 852 pages]

## Life Studies in Letters

By Thomas Dineen

Our end drifts nearer,  
The moon lifts,  
Radiant with terror.  
The state  
Is a diver under a glass bell.

—Robert Lowell, from "Fall 1961"

SHOULD WE CARE what a great poet thinks of the state or its wars? Virgil's patriotic *Aeneid* complemented the imperial ambitions of Augustus. More recent verse has treated nationalism with irony, sometimes situational as well as intentional: during World War I, Wilfred Owen penned the antiwar gem "Dulce Et Decorum Est," only to die in battle a week before the Armistice.

Robert Lowell (1917-77) had a particularly modern reaction to war and the politics that propelled it: resistance and rejection. Dismayed at the many civilian casualties of Allied bombing campaigns, he refused to serve and was jailed as a conscientious objector during World War II. In the late '60s, Lowell frequently appeared at antiwar rallies, deplored nuclear weapons, and yet paradoxically declared himself an "anarchical conservative."

Who was this contradictory character, who wrote some of the best poetry of the last century? These letters are an unselfconscious autobiography—a candid glimpse of what Lowell really felt about his friends, literature, and world affairs. Paleoconservatives will appreciate some of Lowell's nuanced political positions, and admirers of his writing will find at least as much of the real Lowell in his letters as was revealed in Ian Hamilton's excellent 1982 biography.

One is immediately struck by how



Lowell is unable to commit himself to one woman or place, having had three marriages, many liaisons, and almost 40 addresses. He also suffered from both manic and ordinary depression. After undergoing his first major attack in his 30s, Lowell began the work for which he's best known—confessional verse, which sometimes describes his manic episodes.

Though his confessional poems may seem ingenuous, they were in fact laboriously crafted; these letters, by contrast, contain Lowell's most open, impulsive writing. Often they show him striving to cope with his many dualities: "My trouble seems ... to be to bring together in me the Puritanical iron hand of constraint and the gushes of pure wildness." Whether he successfully reconciled his "companionable, social self," as Saskia Hamilton puts it, with his admittedly "ragged conduct...[and] squabbling uncontrollable desires" is open to question.

Lowell's literary vignettes are high points of this book. Adept at capturing someone's essence in a sentence or two, he offers vivid anecdotes about many eminences, including Eliot, Pound, Santayana, Tate, Ransom, and Frost. There are snapshots of Eliot unable to work an elevator; Pound offering "a torrent of oracular advice on how to run Spain"; Dylan Thomas "dumpy, absurd body, hair combed by a salad spoon, brown-button Welsh eyes always moving suspiciously..."; Philip Larkin "low-spoken, bald, deaf, deathbrooding, a sculptured statue of his poems"; Yale professor Cleanth Brooks buying "a 1710 salt box house which he has restored so that it is far more like itself and in period than when it was built."

One sketch of 48-year-old John Berryman, an eventual suicide, stands out:

utterly spooky, teaching brilliant classes, spending weekends in the sanitarium, seedy a little bald, often drunk, married to a girl of twenty-one from a Catholic parochial college, white, innocent beyond belief, just pregnant. They live in two

rooms—in one Kate is asleep, getting through the first child pains, in the other, a thousand books, and John is going into his 7th year on a long poem that fills a suitcase...

Lowell doesn't pull punches even with his closest associates. Randall Jarrell is "a terror for his friends in public—you are either corrected, ignored or expected to loudly agree." Lowell ultimately finds evidence in Jarrell's suicide of how lowbrow America can prove fatal to delicate literati: "Oh but he was an absolutely gifted, and noble man, poisoned and killed ... by our tasteless, superficial, brutal culture."

Lowell also offers valuable insights on the poetic process, writing to Santayana in 1950, "I take a long time to get wound up and only strike fire when faced by the verbal, rhetorical and compositional densities of the verses in front of me; only at that point do I find significance among the narrows and obstacles... One likes to have the hammer in one's hands."

He goes on to show himself at work:

HIS CONFESSIONAL POEMS WERE **LABORIOUSLY CRAFTED**; THESE LETTERS, BY CONTRAST, CONTAIN LOWELL'S **MOST OPEN, IMPULSIVE WRITING**.

"I've been furiously writing at poems and spent whole blue and golden Maine days in my bedroom with a ghastly utility bedside lamp on, my pajamas turning oily with sweat..." Lowell's talent for simile is always evident, as he complains, "Prose is hell. I want to change every two words, but while I toy with revisions, the subject stinks like a dead whale and lies in the mud of the mind's bottom."

Though one may assume that Lowell's mental instability inspired the apparent looseness of his confessional mode, he was never a spontaneous poet. An obsessive reviser, he achieved naturalistic effects only with great effort. "I've been writing poems like a house on fire, i.e., for me that means five in six weeks, fifty versions of each," he writes to William Carlos Williams in 1957. "I've

been experimenting with mixing loose and free meters with strict in order to get the accuracy, naturalness, and multiplicity of prose ..."

Hamilton includes many letters written when Lowell was manic, and their ejaculatory tone balances out the sometimes icy self-assurance of his other mis-sives. Of Lowell's two sides—the manic and the buttoned-up—the former is the more engaging and appealing. As Lowell's mania subsides, he seems to grasp at happiness and stability so fervently because they slip away from him so easily. Indeed, he often writes about his manic self as an unruly third party in need of constant care from the women in his life.

Lowell's descriptions of depression are chilling. "I was a prophet and everything was a symbol," he writes to his mistress Gertrude Buckman in 1949, "then in the hospital: shouting, tearing things up—religion and antics. Then depression (extreme) aching, self-enclosed, fearful of everyone and everything anyone could do, feeling I was

nothing and could do nothing." Recovery evokes arresting comparisons: "Psycho-therapy is rather amazing—something like stirring up the bottom of aquarium—chunks of the past coming up at unfamiliar angles, distinct and then indistinct."

Despite his instabilities, Lowell usually viewed politics with firm convictions. Though initially eager to enlist during World War II, he writes President Roosevelt to justify his refusal to fight because of Allied policy. He finds parallels between Axis Germany and the Civil War South, arguing "Americans cannot plead ignorance of the lasting consequences of a war carried through to unconditional surrender—our Southern states ... after their terrible battering down and occupation, are still far from having recovered even

their material prosperity." He served five months in prison for rejecting the draft.

Lowell's political integrity is also evident as things heat up in the late 1960s. "Mostly, I am afraid of spreading myself thin, of finding myself sounding off on all sorts of things I am not an authority on," he writes when turning down radical Jesuit Daniel Berrigan's request for a preface. And unlike other intellectuals in the '60s, Lowell remained unseduced by the USSR, a "totalitarian tyranny committed to world revolution and total global domination through propaganda and violence." Similarly, Hannah Arendt's *On Revolution* "brings home ... frighteningly how certain red-capped liberal feelings can go with a sinister acceptance of the terrible."

When Lowell goes on anti-Vietnam demonstrations and supports Eugene McCarthy, he appears to be doing so out of grudging allegiance to his left-wing New York/Boston literary milieu. He is never a zealot: "I suppose I am Leftist in a rather removed way, or is it that I am Conservative in a rather middleclass and dissolute way. The labels don't work. I have no faith in idealist violence or in revolution."

In fact, Lowell often sounds reactionary, claiming in 1968, "I have never been New Left, Old Left, or liberal. I

wish to turn the clock back with every breath I take..." As a poet, his first concern is verbal integrity: "I've hardly met the real Lesbian storm troops, but I think they talk like hysterical Negroes and other fanatics—the meaning of words, the object they denote[,] mean nothing." He also sees through popular Beat poets Ginsberg and Corso, who are "phony in a way because they have made a lot of publicity out of very little talent ... they are pathetic and doomed."

Retrograde aristocrat and reluctant do-gooder co-existed uneasily in Lowell. He writes to Elizabeth Bishop in late 1969, "I get less leftist, if that were possible, every day, but am going to the march again ...." Unlike typically earnest liberals, however, Lowell usually had a sense of humor about politics, remarking cavalierly to his second wife, "The one advantage I find in Woman's Lib is that I can start off humorous or angry arguments with *any* woman."

Indeed, Lowell's duality emerges strongly in his tempestuous relations with women; his treatment of wives and mistresses ranged from manic devotion to self-justifying caddishness. He refers to some of his extramarital affairs as "manic crushes," and it's frankly refreshing to see him blow his patrician cool when he falls for Giovanna Madonia, to whom he exults, "I live only in you, your

heart beats in mine...every bone in my body, every drop of blood, every nerve and sinew in my mind, are yours!"

Lowell eventually returns to his wife, Elizabeth Hardwick, ushering off Madonia with: "You are everything! But I see more and more clearly that I will never be over my disturbance and back to my health and work again without Elizabeth." Leaving Madonia to figure out how she could be "everything" to him yet no longer see him, Lowell calms down, re-embracing both Hardwick and epistolary restraint.

He later begins another affair with Anglo-Irish femme fatale Caroline Blackwood, and his behavior turns increasingly erratic. With little explanation, Lowell abandons Hardwick and their teenage daughter to live on Blackwood's estate in Kent. After having a son with Blackwood, Lowell becomes ambivalent about their relationship, asking her, "Aren't we too heady and dangerous for each other?" Lowell's letters to Blackwood grow pitiable; he dies of a heart attack at 60 in the back of a cab on his way to visit Hardwick in New York.

Hamilton includes a superb introduction to Lowell's tumultuous life and makes unobtrusive corrections to his grammar and punctuation. She has also compiled extensive notes that contain illuminating information about the persons, events, and controversies Lowell refers to in his letters.

This book will interest many readers. Lowell devotees will find details of his life and tastes unavailable elsewhere. Students of 20th-century literature will value Lowell's observations about his contemporaries. Poets can trace Lowell's artistic development and see how he wrestled with his craft.

Ideologues of the Left or Right won't find much to like here, however. Though Lowell cared about politics, he cared infinitely more about his art. Warfare and other worldly events were his muses, not his masters. ■

*Thomas Dineen writes from Baltimore, Md.*

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# At Sea With Papa



On board S/Y *Bushido*—"In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain and the

mountains. In the bed of the river there were pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun, and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels. Troops went by the house and down the road and the dust they raised powdered the leaves of the trees. ..." I once quoted the exact sentence in the London *Spectator* and called it writing at its best, and a very nice Oxford don wrote me a very nice letter telling me I was full of crap. This was more than 15 years ago.

Now the poor little Greek boy is not about to get into a literary argument with Oxford dons, but when was the last time one of them boxed tough guys, bedded beautiful women, and bothered to blow his head off when the talent had flown, as the great Papa Hemingway did? Exiting on time is very important for a writer, and Papa did the right thing. That his father and uncle had also chosen the easy way out—as did his niece Margaux—is immaterial.

Papa was the first literary pop star, and the midgets have never forgiven him for it. *A Farewell to Arms* is arguably his best. Here he is again in Chapter XXI: "In September the first cool nights came, then the days were cool and the leaves on the trees in the park began to turn color and we knew the summer was gone." Talk about economy of expression and individual style. Still, critics always complained of the effect of the Hemingway legend on his work and style. What was the poor man supposed to do? Live an uxorious life in a crappy small town and write about a traveling salesman's loveless marriage?

Papa never bothered to explain the leopard in his great short story "The Snows of Kilimanjaro." This was not only his masterpiece but also his summing up at midlife and mid-career. He disliked explainers, so the leopard's frozen carcass was clear evidence as far as he was concerned. Harry, a writer, and Helen, his rich wife, had come to Africa to escape the easy life of their friends. It's Papa regretting that he no longer had time to write the things he wanted to write, and Harry Walden, dying of gangrene in his African tent, summed up the author's perceived failures. Hemingway had dissipated a lot by the time he wrote "Snows." The critics were after him, so he had the hyenas circling Harry's tent. Poor hyenas. What did they ever do to be compared to critics?

One of his biographers, James Bellow, wrote, "There had been too much drink, too many wives, too much company of the rich and idle, the dumb and the fawning ... too much Papa ..." All true, I'm afraid, but mixing with the wrong people comes in handy. Here's the opening of my favorite, *The Sun Also Rises*: "Robert Cohn was once middleweight boxing champion of Princeton. Do not think that I am very much impressed by that as a boxing title, but it meant a lot to Cohn. He cared nothing for boxing, in fact he disliked it, but he learned it painfully and thoroughly to counteract the feeling of inferiority he had felt on being treated as a Jew at Princeton..." The rich and idle do treat people as inferiors and Hemingstein, as he liked to call himself,

picked it up presto. He turns Cohn—in real life John Loeb, a very rich American banker—into an armed romantic, ready to damage anyone in the false belief that fighting means virility. (Well, I always thought it did, until I got old.) Mind you, Hemingway treats Cohn badly in the book. Cohn likes the idea of a mistress more than his actual mistress, as he likes the prestige of being a writer, though he's a lousy one. Papa sure knew human nature, and knew it early on.

The sense of place was Hemingway's great strength. Not even the great Scott Fitzgerald could approach him in describing a place while keeping the background unobtrusive. Feelings were Scott's forte; sense of place and description were Papa's. Yet when he wrote about Mr. Bumby's red cheeks—"like an Arlberg boy"—while his wife Hadley held his son and waited for him to disembark from the Alpine train after his dirty weekend in Paris with Pauline, the reader can sense the guilt he feels even before he swears in *A Moveable Feast* never to cheat again. He was also good when at sea. In fact, he won the Nobel for *The Old Man and the Sea*, by far his weakest as far as I'm concerned. The relationship between a boat and her owner is a tricky one. The nearest comparison has to be that of a man and his mistress. Here's Papa on a boat: "She was going to be difficult from the start. Born to challenge a man. I put up her sails and she began to moan, but she was fast and I felt good, and then she shuttered, and began to fly. And I felt clean, and true, and swore I'd never leave her. But then I did."

Well, if you believe the last one is Papa's, you'll believe anything, but after three weeks on a sailing boat even a Greek thinks he's Hemingway. ■

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